

means conciliating and not depriving the oppressed classes of definite means and methods of fighting to overthrow the oppressors.

For instance, when, in the Revolution of 1917, the question of the real meaning and the role of the state arose in all its magnitude as a practical question demanding immediate action on a wide mass scale, all the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks immediately and completely sank to the petty-bourgeois theory that the "state" "conciliates" classes. Innumerable resolutions and articles by politicians of both these parties are thoroughly saturated with this purely petty-bourgeois and philistine "conciliation" theory. Petty-bourgeois democracy is never able to understand that the state is the organ of the rule of a definite class which *cannot* be reconciled with its antipode (the class opposite to it). Their attitude towards the state is one of the most striking proofs that our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks are not socialists at all (which we Bolsheviks have always maintained), but petty-bourgeois democrats with near-Socialist phraseology.

On the other hand, the "Kautskyan" distortion of Marxism is far more subtle. "Theoretically," it is not denied that the state is the organ of class rule, or that class antagonisms are irreconcilable. But what is lost sight of or glossed over is this: if the state is the product of irreconcilable class antagonisms, if it is a power standing *above society* and "*increasingly alienating itself from it*," it is clear that the liberation of the oppressed class is impossible, not only without a violent revolution, *but also without the destruction* of the apparatus of state power which was created by the ruling class and which is the embodiment of this "alienation." As we shall see later, Marx very definitely drew this theoretically self-evident conclusion from a concrete historical analysis of the tasks of the revolution. And—as we shall show fully in our subsequent remarks—it is precisely this conclusion which Kautsky has "forgotten" and distorted.

2. SPECIAL BODIES OF ARMED MEN, PRISONS, ETC.

Engels continues:

"As against the ancient *gentile* organisation, the primary distinguishing feature of the state is the division of the subjects of the state according to territory."

Such a division seems "natural" to us, but it cost a prolonged struggle against the old form of tribal or gentile society.

"... The second is the establishment of a *public power*, which is no longer directly identical with the population organising itself as an armed power. This special public power is necessary, because a self-acting armed organisation of the population has become impossible since the cleavage into classes. . . . This public power exists in every

STATE
AND
REVOLUTION

by
V. I. LENIN

LONDON
LAWRENCE & WISHART LTD

grounds for speaking of the state in both cases—and, on the other hand, the features which differentiate them, or the features of the transition to the abolition of the state

“How is the housing question to be solved then? In present-day society, just as any other social question is solved by the gradual economic adjustment of supply and demand, a solution which ever reproduces the question itself anew and therefore is no solution. How a social revolution would solve this question depends not only on the circumstances which would exist in each case, but is also connected with much more far-reaching questions, among which one of the most fundamental is the abolition of the antithesis between town and country. As it is not our task to create Utopian systems for the arrangement of the society of the future, it would be more than idle to go into the question here. But one thing is certain: there are already in existence sufficient buildings for dwellings in the big towns to remedy immediately any real ‘housing shortage,’ given rational utilisation of them. This can naturally only take place by the expropriation of the present owners and by quartering in their houses the homeless or those workers who are excessively overcrowded in their old houses. Immediately the proletariat has conquered political power such a measure dictated in the public interest will be just as easy to carry out as other expropriations and billeting are by the existing state”¹

The change in the form of the state power is not discussed here, but merely the character of its activity. Expropriations and billeting of houses take place by order even of the present state. From the formal point of view the proletarian state will also “order” the occupation of houses and expropriation of buildings. But it is clear that the old executive apparatus, the bureaucracy, which is connected with the bourgeoisie, would simply be unfit to carry out the orders of the proletarian state.

“For the rest it must be pointed out that the ‘actual seizure’ of all instruments of labour, the seizure of industry as a whole by the working people, is the direct contrary to the Proudhonist theory of ‘gradual redemption’. Under the latter, the *individual worker* becomes the owner of the dwelling, the peasant-farm, the instruments of labour, under the former, the ‘working people’ remain the collective owners of the houses, factories and instruments of labour, and would hardly permit of their use, at least in a transitional period, by individuals and associations without compensation for the costs, just as the abolition of property in land is not the abolition of ground-rent, but its transfer, although in a modified form, to society. The actual seizure of all the instruments of labour by the working people therefore does not at all exclude the retention of the rent relations”¹

We shall discuss the question touched upon in this passage, namely, the economic reasons for the withering away of the state, in the next chapter. Engels expresses himself most cautiously, saying that the proletarian state would “hardly” permit, “at least in a transitional period,” the use of houses without compensation for the cost. The letting of houses that belong to the

¹ *The Housing Question* Part One (“How Proudhon Solves the Housing Question”), Lawrence & Wishart, London—Ed

First Published in THE LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY, 1933

Reprinted 1937

Reprinted 1941

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

*Printed in Great Britain
by Hardy Press Ltd, (T U) Bournemouth*

As regards the republic, Engels made this the centre of gravity of his criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme. And when we remember what importance the Erfurt Programme has acquired in the whole of international Social Democracy, that it has become the model for the whole of the Second International, it may be said without exaggeration that Engels thereby criticised the opportunism of the whole Second International. Engels writes:

"The political demands of the draft have one great fault. What actually ought to be said is *not there* . . ." (Engels' italics.)¹

And, later on, he makes it clear that the German constitution is but a copy of the very reactionary constitution of 1850; that the Reichstag is only, as Wilhelm Liebknecht put it, "the fig-leaf of absolutism"; and that to wish "to transform all the instruments of labour into public property" on the basis of a constitution which legalises the existence of petty states and the federation of petty German states is an "obvious absurdity."

"To touch on that is dangerous, however," Engels adds, knowing full well that it is impossible, for reasons of legality, to include in the programme the demand for a republic in Germany. But Engels does not rest content with this obvious argument which satisfied "everybody." He continues:

"And yet somehow or other the thing has got to be attacked . . . How necessary this is is shown precisely at the present time by the inroads which opportunism is making in a great section of the Social-Democratic press. For fear of a revival of the Anti-Socialist Law and from recollection of all manner of premature utterances which were let fall during the reign of that law the present legal position of the Party in Germany is now all of a sudden to be treated as sufficient for the carrying out of all the demands of the Party by peaceful means."¹

Engels particularly stresses the fundamental fact that the German Social Democrats were prompted by fear of a revival of the Anti-Socialist Law, and unhesitatingly calls this opportunism; he declares that precisely because there was no republic and no freedom in Germany, the dreams of a "peaceful" path were absolutely absurd. Engels is sufficiently careful not to tie his hands. He admits that in republican or very free countries "one can conceive (only "conceive"!) of a peaceful development towards socialism, but in Germany, he repeats,

"in Germany, where the Government is almost almighty and the Reichstag and all other representative bodies have no real power, to proclaim such a thing in Germany—and moreover when there is

¹ *Ibid.*: see also *The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*.—Ed. Eng. ed.

CONTENTS

7105

	Page
Preface to First Edition and Preface to Second Edition	5
Chapter	
I CLASS SOCIETY AND THE STATE	7
1 The State as the Product of the Irreconcilability of Class Antagonisms, 2 Special Bodies of Armed Men, Prisons, etc., 3 The State as an Instrument for the Exploitation of the Oppressed Class, 4 The "Withering Away" of the State and Violent Revolution	
II THE STATE AND REVOLUTION THE EXPERIENCE OF 1848-1851	19
1 The Eve of the Revolution, 2 The Revolution Summed Up, 3 The Presentation of the Question by Marx in 1852	
III THE STATE AND REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871 MARX'S ANALYSIS	29
1 Wherein Lay the Heroism of the Communards' Attempt? 2 What is to Supersede the Smashed State Machine?, 3 The Abolition of Parliamentarism, 4 The Organisation of National Unity 5 The Abolition of the Parasite State	
IV SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATIONS BY ENGELS	44
1 <i>The Housing Question</i> 2 Controversy with the Anarchists, 3 Letter to Bebel, 4 Criticism of the Draft of the Erfurt Programme, 5 The 1891 Introduction to Marx's <i>Civil War in France</i> , 6 Engels on Overcoming Democracy	
V THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE	63
1 Marx's Presentation of the Question, 2 The Transition from Capitalism to Communism, 3 The First Phase of Communist Society, 4 The Higher Phase of Communist Society	
VI THE VULGARISATION OF MARXISM BY THE OPPORTUNISTS	79
1 Plekhanov's Controversy with the Anarchists, 2 Kautsky's Controversy with the Opportunists, 3 Kautsky's Controversy with Pannekoek	
POSTSCRIPT TO FIRST EDITION	94

to crush, to smash to atoms, to wipe off the face of the earth the bourgeois, even the republican bourgeois, state machine, the standing army, the police and bureaucracy; to substitute for all this a *more* democratic, but still a state machine in the shape of the armed masses of workers who become transformed into a universal people's militia.

Here "quantity is transformed into quality": *such* a degree of democracy is connected with overstepping the boundaries of bourgeois society, with the beginning of its socialist reconstruction. If, indeed, *all* take part in the administration of the state, capitalism cannot retain its hold. The development of capitalism, in turn, itself creates the *prerequisites* that *enable* indeed "all" to take part in the administration of the state. Some of these prerequisites are: universal literacy, already achieved in most of the advanced capitalist countries, then the "training and disciplining" of millions of workers by the huge, complex and socialised apparatus of the post-office, the railways, the big factories, large-scale commerce banking, etc., etc.

With such *economic* prerequisites it is quite possible, immediately, overnight, after the overthrow of the capitalists and bureaucrats, to supersede them in the *control* of production and distribution, in the work of *keeping account* of labour and its products by the armed workers, by the whole of the armed population. (The question of control and accounting must not be confused with the question of the scientifically educated staff of engineers, agronomists and so on. These gentlemen are working to-day and obey the capitalists; they will work even better to-morrow and obey the armed workers.)

Accounting and control—these are the *principal* things that are necessary for the "setting-up" and correct functioning of the *first phase* of communist society. *All* citizens are transformed into the salaried employees of the state, which consists of the armed workers. *All* citizens become employees and workers of a *single* national state "syndicate." All that is required is that they should work equally—do their proper share of work—and get paid equally. The accounting and control necessary for this have been so utterly *simplified* by capitalism that they have become the extraordinarily simple operations of checking, recording and issuing receipts, which anyone who can read and write and who knows the first four rules of arithmetic can perform.¹

¹ When most of the functions of the state are reduced to this accounting and control by the workers themselves, it ceases to be a "political state," the "public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into . . . simple administrative functions." (cf. above, chapter IV, §2, Engels' "Controversy With the Anarchists").

LITTLE LENIN LIBRARY

1	THE TEACHINGS OF KARL MARX	6d
2	THE WAR AND THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL	6d
3	SOCIALISM AND WAR	6d
4	WHAT IS TO BE DONE ?	2/-
5	THE PARIS COMMUNE	1/-
6	THE REVOLUTION OF 1905	1/-
7	RELIGION	1/-
8	LETTERS FROM ALAR	9d
9	THE TASK OF THE PROLETARIAT	9d
10	THE APRIL CONFERENCE	1/-
11	THE THREATENING CATASTROPHE AND HOW TO AVERT IT	1/-
12	WILL THE BOLSHEVIKS MAINTAIN POWER ?	9d
13	ON THE EVE OF OCTOBER	9d
14	STATE AND REVOLUTION	9d
15	IMPERIALISM	1/6
16	"LEFT WING" COMMUNISM	9d
17	TWO TACTICS OF SOCIAL DEMOCRACY	1/6
18	THE PROLETARIAN REVOLUTION AND KAUTSKY THE RENEGADE	1/6
19	THE DECEPTION OF THE PEOPLE	6d
20	WAR AND THE WORKERS	6d
21	LENIN AND STALIN ON YOUTH	9d
22	OPPORTUNISM AND SOCIAL CHAUVINISM	6d
23	LENIN AND STALIN ON THE STATE	6d

LITTLE STALIN LIBRARY

1	FOUNDATIONS OF LENINISM	1/-
2	NOTES OF A DELEGATE, AND CLASS PARTY	6d
3	ON LENIN	6d

(Other titles in preparation)

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE question of the state is now acquiring particular importance both in the realm of theory and in the realm of practical politics. The imperialist war has greatly accelerated and intensified the process of transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism. The monstrous oppression of the masses of the toilers by the state—which is becoming merged more and more with the all-powerful capitalist combines—is becoming ever more monstrous. The advanced countries are being converted—we speak here of their “rear”—into military convict prisons for the workers.

The unprecedented horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the position of the masses unbearable and are causing their anger to grow. An international proletarian revolution is clearly maturing. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance.

The elements of opportunism accumulated during the decades of comparatively peaceful development caused the predominance of social-chauvinism in the official Socialist Parties throughout the world. This trend of socialism in words and chauvinism in deeds (Plekhanov, Potresov, Breshkovskaya, Rubanovitch, and, in a slightly concealed form, Messrs Tseretelli, Chernov and Co., in Russia; Scheidemann, Legien, David and others in Germany; Renaudel, Guesde, Vandervelde in France and Belgium; Hyndman and the Fabians in England, etc., etc.) is distinguished for the base, servile adaptation of the “leaders” of “socialism” to the interests not only of “their” national bourgeoisie, but also of “their” state—for the majority of the so-called Great Powers have long been exploiting and enslaving a number of small and weak nationalities. The imperialist war is precisely a war for the division and re-division of this kind of booty. The struggle for the emancipation of the masses of the toilers from the influence of the bourgeoisie in general, and of the imperialist bourgeoisie in particular, is impossible without a struggle against opportunist prejudices about the “state.”

First of all we examine Marx's and Engels' doctrine of the state and deal in particular detail with those aspects of their doctrine which have been forgotten or have been opportunistically distorted. Then we analyse separately the chief representative of these distortions, Karl Kautsky, the best-known leader of the Second International (1889-1914), which has suffered such

miserable bankruptcy in the present war. Finally we sum up, in the main, the experiences of the Russian Revolution of 1905 and particularly of that of 1917. Apparently, the latter is now (middle of August 1917) completing the first stage of its development but, generally speaking, this revolution as a whole can only be regarded as a link in the chain of socialist proletarian revolutions called forth by the imperialist war. Hence, the question of the relation of the socialist proletarian revolution to the state acquires, not only practical political importance, but the importance of an urgent problem of the day, the problem of explaining to the masses what they will have to do to emancipate themselves from the yoke of capitalism in the very near future.

THE AUTHOR

August 1917

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The present, second edition is published almost without change except that Section 3 has been added to Chapter II.

THE AUTHOR,

Moscow, December 30 1918

THE STATE AND REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

CLASS SOCIETY AND THE STATE

1 THE STATE AS THE PRODUCT OF THE IRRECONCILABILITY OF CLASS ANTAGONISMS

WHAT IS NOW happening to Marx's doctrine has, in the course of history, often happened to the doctrines of other revolutionary thinkers and leaders of oppressed classes struggling for emancipation. During the lifetime of great revolutionaries, the oppressing classes relentlessly persecute them, treat their teachings with malicious hostility and fierce hatred, and subject them to an unscrupulous campaign of lies and slanders. After their deaths, attempts are made to convert them into harmless icons, to canonise them, so to speak, and to surround their *names* with a certain halo for the "consolation" of the oppressed classes and with the object of duping them, while at the same time emasculating the revolutionary doctrine of its content, vulgarising it and blunting its revolutionary edge. At the present time, the bourgeoisie and the opportunists in the labour movement concur in this "revision" of Marxism. They omit, obliterate and distort the revolutionary side of its doctrine, its revolutionary soul. They push to the foreground and extol what is or seems acceptable to the bourgeoisie. All the social-chauvinists are now "Marxists" (don't laugh!) And more and more frequently, German bourgeois professors, erstwhile specialists in the extermination of Marxism, are speaking of the "national-German" Marx, who, they aver, trained the labour unions which are so splendidly organised for the purpose of conducting a predatory war!

In such circumstances, in view of the incredibly widespread nature of the distortions of Marxism, our first task is to *restore* the true doctrine of Marx on the state. For this purpose it will be necessary to quote at length from the works of Marx and Engels. Of course, long quotations will make the text cumbersome and will not help to make it popular reading, but we cannot possibly avoid them. All, or at any rate, all the most essential passages in the works of Marx and Engels on the subject of the state must necessarily be given as fully as possible, in order that the reader may form an independent opinion on the totality of views of the founders of scientific socialism, and on the development of those views, and in order that their distortion by the now prevailing "Kautskyism" may be documentarily proved and clearly demonstrated.

Let us begin with the most popular of Engels' work, *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staates*, the sixth edition of which was published in Stuttgart as far back as 1894. We must translate the quotations from the German originals as the Russian translations, although very numerous, are for the most part either incomplete or very unsatisfactory.

Summing up his historical analysis, Engels says

'The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from the outside, just as little is it "the reality of the moral idea" "the image and reality of reason," as Hegel asserts. Rather, it is a product of society at a certain stage of development: it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms, which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power apparently standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict and keeping it within the bounds of "order," and this power arising out of society but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.'¹

This fully expresses the basic idea of Marxism on the question of the historical role and the meaning of the state. The state is the product and the manifestation of the *irreconcilability* of class antagonisms. The state arises when, where and to the extent that class antagonisms *cannot* be objectively reconciled. And, conversely, the existence of the state proves that the class antagonisms *are* irreconcilable.

It is precisely on this most important and fundamental point that distortions of Marxism, proceeding along two main lines, begin.

On the one hand, the bourgeois ideologists, and particularly the petty-bourgeois ideologists, compelled by the pressure of indisputable historical facts to admit that the state exists only where there are class antagonisms and the class struggle, "correct" Marx in a way that makes it appear that the state is an organ for the conciliation of classes. According to Marx, the state could neither arise nor continue to exist if it were possible to conciliate classes. According to the petty-bourgeois and Philistine professors and publicists—frequently on the strength of well-meaning references to Marx¹—the state conciliates classes. According to Marx, the state is an organ of class *rule*, an organ for the *oppression* of one class by another (it creates "order"), which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between the classes. In the opinion of the petty-bourgeois politicians, order means the conciliation of classes, and not the oppression of one class by another, to moderate collisions

¹ See Frederick Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*. Lawrence & Wishart, London, pp. 193-4.—Ed
8]

state it consists not merely of armed men, but of material appendages, prisons and coercive institutions of all kinds of which gentile society knew nothing " 1

Engels further elucidates the concept of the "power" which is termed the state—a power which arises from society, but which places itself above it and becomes more and more alienated from it. What does this power mainly consist of? It consists of special bodies of armed men which have prisons, etc. at their disposal.

We are justified in speaking of special bodies of armed men, because the public power which is an attribute of every state is not "directly identical" with the armed population, with its "self-acting armed organisation."

Like all the great revolutionary thinkers, Engels tried to draw the attention of the class-conscious workers to the very fact which prevailing Philistinism regards as least worthy of attention as the most common and sanctified not only by long standing, but one might say by petrified prejudices. A standing army and police are the chief instruments of state power. But can it be otherwise?

From the point of view of the vast majority of Europeans of the end of the nineteenth century whom Engels was addressing, and who had not lived through or closely observed a single great revolution it could not be otherwise. They completely failed to understand what a "self-acting armed organisation of the population" was. To the question whence arose the need for special bodies of armed men standing above society and becoming alienated from it (police and standing army) the West European and Russian Philistines are inclined to answer with a few phrases borrowed from Spencer or Mikhailovski, by referring to the complexity of social life, the differentiation of functions, and so forth.

Such a reference seems "scientific" it effectively dulls the senses of the average man and obscures the most important and basic fact, namely, the cleavage of society into irreconcilably antagonistic classes. Had this cleavage not existed, the "self-acting armed organisation of the population" might have differed from the primitive organisation of a tribe of monkeys grasping sticks, or of primitive man, or of men united in a tribal form of society by its complexity, its high technique, and so forth, but it would still have been possible.

It is not possible now because civilised society is divided into antagonistic and, indeed, irreconcilably antagonistic classes, the "self-acting" arming of which would lead to an armed struggle between them. A state arises a special force is created in the

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

form of special bodies of armed men, and every revolution,¹ by destroying the state apparatus,² demonstrates to us how the ruling class strives to restore the special bodies of armed men which serve it, and how the oppressed class strives to create a new organisation of this kind, capable of serving not the exploiters but the exploited

In the above argument, Engels raises theoretically the very question which every great revolution raises practically, palpably and on a mass scale of action, namely the question of the relation between special bodies of armed men and the "self-acting armed organisation of the population" We shall see how this is concretely illustrated by the experience of the European and Russian revolutions

But let us return to Engels' exposition

He points out that sometimes, in certain parts of North America, for example, this public power is weak (he has in mind a rare exception in capitalist society, and parts of North America in its pre-imperialist days where the free colonist predominated), but that in general it grows stronger

"It [the public power] grows stronger however, in proportion as the class antagonisms within the state become more acute, and with the growth in size and population of the adjacent states We have only to look at our present-day Europe, where class struggle and rivalry in conquest have screwed up the public power to such a pitch that it threatens to devour the whole of society and even that state itself"³

This was written no later than the beginning of the nineties of the last century, Engels' last preface being dated June 16, 1891 The turn towards imperialism—meaning by that the complete domination of the trusts, the omnipotence of the big banks, a colonial policy on a grand scale, and so forth—was only just beginning in France, and was even weaker in North America and in Germany Since then "rivalry in conquest" has made gigantic strides—especially as, by the beginning of the second decade of the twentieth century, the whole world had been finally divided up among these "rivals in conquest," i.e., among the great predatory powers Since then, military and naval armaments have grown to monstrous proportions, and the predatory war of 1914-17 for the domination of the world by England or Germany, for the division of the spoils, has brought the "devouring" of all the forces of society by the rapacious state power to the verge of complete catastrophe

¹ The original manuscript reads "great revolution"—Ed

² In the original manuscript there followed the words "reveals to us the naked class struggle"—Ed

³ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

As early as 1891 Engels was able to point to "rivalry in conquest" as one of the most important distinguishing features of the foreign policy of the Great Powers, but in 1914-17, when this rivalry, many times intensified, has given birth to an imperialist war, the rascally social-chauvinists cover up their defence of the predatory interests of "their" bourgeoisie by phrases about "defence of the fatherland," "defence of the republic and the revolution," etc.

3 THE STATE AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE EXPLOITATION OF THE OPPRESSED CLASS

For the maintenance of a special public power standing above society taxes and state loans are needed

"Possessing the public power and the right to exact taxes, the officials now exist as organs of society standing *above* society. The free, voluntary respect which was accorded to the organs of the gentile organisation does not satisfy them, even if they could have it"¹

Special laws are enacted proclaiming the sanctity and immunity of the officials. "The shabbiest police servant" has more "authority" than all the representatives of the tribe put together, but even the head of the military power of a civilised state may well envy a tribal chief the "unfeigned and undisputed respect" the latter enjoys

Here the question of the privileged position of the officials as organs of state power is stated. The main point indicated is what puts them above society? We shall see how this theoretical problem was solved in practice by the Paris Commune in 1871 and how it was slurred over in a reactionary manner by Kautsky in 1912

"As the state arose out of the need to hold class antagonisms in check but as it, at the same time, arose in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, which through the medium of the state became also the dominant class politically, and thus acquired new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class"¹

It was not only the ancient and feudal states that were organs for the exploitation of the slaves and serfs but

"the contemporary representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage-labour by capital. By way of exception, however, periods occur when the warring classes are so nearly balanced that the state power, ostensibly appearing as a mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain independence in relation to both"

Such, for instance, were the absolute monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Bonapartism of the First and Second Empires in France, and the Bismarck regime in Germany. Such, we add, is the present Kerensky government in republican Russia since it began to persecute the revolutionary

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

proletariat, at a moment when, thanks to the leadership of the petty-bourgeois democrats, the Soviets had *already* become impotent while the bourgeoisie was *not yet* strong enough openly to disperse them

In a democratic republic, Engels continues, "wealth wields its power indirectly, but all the more effectively," first, by means of the "direct corruption of the officials" (America), second, by means of "the alliance between the government and the Stock Exchange" (France and America)

At the present time, imperialism and the domination of the banks have "developed" both these methods of defending and asserting the omnipotence of wealth in democratic republics of all descriptions to an unusually fine art. For instance, in the very first months of the Russian democratic republic, one might say during the honeymoon of the union of the "Socialist" S R's and the Mensheviks with the bourgeoisie, Mr Palchinsky, in the coalition government, obstructed every measure intended for the purpose of restraining the capitalists and their marauding practices, their plundering of the public treasury by means of war contracts. When Mr Palchinsky resigned (and, of course, was replaced by an exactly similar Palchinsky), the capitalists "rewarded" him with a "soft" job and a salary of 120,000 roubles per annum. What would you call this—direct or indirect corruption? An alliance between the government and the syndicates, or "only" friendly relations? What role do the Chernovs, Tseretellis, Avksentyevs and Skobelevs play? Are they the "direct" or only the indirect allies of the millionaire treasury looters?

The omnipotence of "wealth" is thus more *secure* in a democratic republic, since it does not depend¹ on the faulty political shell of capitalism. A democratic republic is the best possible political shell for capitalism, and, therefore, once capital has gained control of this very best shell (through the Palchinskys, Chernovs, Tseretellis and Co.), it establishes its powers so securely, so firmly, that *no* change, either of persons, of institutions, or of parties in the bourgeois-democratic republic, can shake it.

We must also note that Engels very definitely calls universal suffrage an instrument of bourgeois rule. Universal suffrage, he says, obviously summing up the long experience of German Social-Democracy, is

"an index of the maturity of the working class. It cannot and never will be anything more in the modern state."

¹ The original manuscript read "on the individual defects of the political mechanism"—Ed

The petty-bourgeois democrats, such as our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and also their twin brothers, the social-chauvinists and opportunists of Western Europe, all expect "more" from universal suffrage. They themselves share and instil into the minds of the people the wrong idea that universal suffrage "in the *modern* state" is really capable of expressing the will of the majority of the toilers and of ensuring its realisation.

Here we can only note this wrong idea, only point out that Engels' perfectly clear, precise and concrete statement is distorted at every step in the propaganda and agitation conducted by the "official" (*i.e.*, opportunist) Socialist Parties. A detailed elucidation of the utter falsity of this idea, which Engels brushes aside, is given in our further account of the views of Marx and Engels on the "*modern*" state.

Engels gives a general summary of his views in the most popular of his works in the following words:

"The state, therefore, has not existed from all eternity. There have been societies which managed without it, which had no conception of the state and state power. At a certain stage of economic development, which was necessarily bound up with the cleavage of society into classes, the state became a necessity owing to this cleavage. We are now rapidly approaching a stage in the development of production at which the existence of these classes has not only ceased to be a necessity, but is becoming a positive hindrance to production. They will fall as inevitably as they arose at an earlier stage. Along with them, the state will inevitably fall. The society that organises production anew on the basis of the free and equal association of the producers will put the whole state machine where it will then belong—in the museum of antiquities, side by side with the spinning wheel and the bronze axe."¹

We do not often come across this passage in the propaganda and agitation literature of present-day Social-Democracy. But even when we do come across it, it is generally quoted in the same manner as one bows before an icon, *i.e.*, it is done merely to show official respect for Engels, and no attempt is made to gauge the breadth and depth of the revolution that this relegating of "the whole state machine" to the museum of antiquities presupposes. In most cases we do not even find an understanding of what Engels calls the state machine.

4 THE "WITHERING AWAY" OF THE STATE AND VIOLENT REVOLUTION

Engels' words regarding the "withering away" of the state are so widely known, they are so often quoted, and they reveal the significance of the customary painting of Marxism to look like opportunism so clearly that we must deal with them in detail. We shall quote the whole passage from which they are taken.

¹ *Ibid*—Ed. Eng. ed.

"The proletariat seizes the state power and transforms the means of production in the first instance into state property. But in doing this, it puts an end to itself as the proletariat, it puts an end to all class differences and class antagonisms, it puts an end also to the state as the state. Former society, moving in class antagonisms, had need of the state, that is, an organisation of the exploiting class, at each period for the maintenance of its external conditions of production, that is, therefore, for the forcible holding down of the exploited class in the conditions of oppression (slavery, villeinage or serfdom, wage-labour) determined by the existing mode of production. The state was the official representative of society as a whole, its embodiment in a visible corporation, but it was thus only in so far as it was the state of that class which, itself, in its epoch, represented society as a whole. In ancient times, the state of the slave-owning citizens, in the Middle Ages, of the feudal nobility, in our epoch, of the bourgeoisie. When ultimately it becomes really representative of society as a whole, it makes itself superfluous. As soon as there is no longer any class of society to be held in subjection, as soon as, along with class domination and the struggle for individual existence based on the former anarchy of production the collisions and excesses arising from these have also been abolished, there is nothing more to be repressed, which would make a special repressive force, a state, necessary. The first act in which the state really comes forward as the representative of society as a whole—the taking possession of the means of production in the name of society—is at the same time its last independent act as a state. The interference of the state power in social relations becomes superfluous in one sphere after another, and then ceases of itself. The government of persons is replaced by the administration of things and the direction of the process of production. The state is not 'abolished,' it *withers away*. It is from this standpoint that we must appraise the phrase 'free people's state'—both its justification at times for agitational purposes, and its ultimate scientific inadequacy—and also the demand of the so-called anarchists that the state should be abolished overnight."¹

It may be said without fear of error that of this argument of Engels', which is so singularly rich in ideas, only one point has become an integral part of socialist thought among modern Socialist Parties, namely, that according to Marx the state "witheres away"—as distinct from the anarchist doctrine of the "abolition of the state." To emasculate Marxism in such a manner is to reduce it to opportunism for such an "interpretation" only leaves the hazy conception of a slow, even, gradual change, of absence of leaps and storms, of absence of revolution. The current, widespread, mass, if one may say so, conception of the "withering away" of the state undoubtedly means the slurring over if not the repudiation, of revolution.

Such an "interpretation" is the crudest distortion of Marxism, advantageous only to the bourgeoisie, in point of theory, it is based on a disregard for the most important circumstances and considerations pointed out, say, in the "summary" of Engels' argument we have just quoted in full.

¹ Frederick Engels, *Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science* [*Anti-Dühring*], Lawrence & Wishart, London, pp 308-9—Ed

In the first place, Engels at the very outset of his argument says that, in assuming state power, the proletariat by that "puts an end to the state as the state" It is not "good form" to ponder over what this means Generally, it is either ignored altogether, or it is considered to be a piece of "Hegelian weakness" on Engels' part As a matter of fact, however, these words briefly express the experience of one of the great proletarian revolutions, the Paris Commune of 1871, of which we shall speak in greater detail in its proper place As a matter of fact, Engels speaks here of the "abolition" of the *bourgeois* state by the proletarian revolution, while the words about its withering away refer to the remnants of the *proletarian* state *after* the socialist revolution According to Engels the bourgeois state does not "wither away," but is "*put an end to*" by the proletariat in the course of the revolution What withers away after the revolution is the proletarian state or semi-state

Secondly, the state is a "special repressive force" Engels gives this splendid and extremely profound definition here with complete lucidity And from it follows that the "special repressive force" for the suppression of the proletariat by the bourgeoisie, for the suppression of the millions of toilers by a handful of the rich, must be superseded by a "special repressive force" for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat (the dictatorship of the proletariat) This is precisely what is meant by putting an end to "the state as the state" This is precisely the "act" of taking possession of the means of production in the name of society And it is obvious that such a substitution of one (proletarian) "special repressive force" for another (bourgeois) "special repressive force" cannot possibly take place in the form of "withering away"

Thirdly, in regard to the state "withering away," and the even more expressive and colourful "ceasing of itself," Engels refers quite clearly and definitely to the period after the state has "taken possession of the means of production in the name of society," that is, *after* the socialist revolution We all know that the political form of the "state" at that time is the most complete democracy But it never enters the head of any of the opportunists who shamelessly distort Marxism that Engels here speaks of *democracy* "withering away," or "ceasing of itself" This seems very strange at first sight, but it is "unintelligible" only to those who have not pondered over the fact that democracy is *also* a state and that, consequently, democracy will also disappear when the state disappears Revolution alone can "put an end" to the bourgeois state The state in general, *i.e.*, the most complete democracy, can only "wither away"

Fourthly, after formulating his famous proposition that "the state withers away," Engels at once explains concretely that this proposition is directed equally against the opportunists and the anarchists. In doing this, however, Engels puts in the forefront the conclusion deduced from the proposition, the "state withers away," which is directed against the opportunists.

One can wager that out of every 10,000 persons who have read or heard about the "withering away" of the state, 9,990 do not know, or do not remember, that Engels did not direct the conclusions he deduced from this proposition against the anarchists *alone*. Of the remaining ten, probably nine do not know the meaning of "free people's state" or why an attack on this watchword contains an attack on the opportunists. This is how history is written! This is how a great revolutionary doctrine is imperceptibly falsified and adapted to prevailing Philistinism! The conclusions drawn against the anarchists has been repeated thousands of times, vulgarised, dinned into people's heads in the crudest fashion and has acquired the strength of a prejudice, whereas the conclusion drawn against the opportunists has been hushed up and "forgotten"!

The "free people's state" was a programme demand and a popular slogan of the German Social-democrats in the 'seventies. The only political content of this slogan is a pompous Philistine description of the concept democracy. In so far as it hinted in a lawful manner at a democratic republic, Engels was prepared to "justify" its use "for a time" from an agitational point of view. But it was an opportunist slogan, for it not only expressed an embellishment of bourgeois democracy, but also lack of understanding of the socialist criticism of the state in general. We are in favour of a democratic republic as the best form of state for the proletariat under capitalism, but we have no right to forget that wage-slavery is the lot of the people even in the most democratic bourgeois republic. Furthermore, every state is a "special repressive force" for the suppression of the oppressed class. Consequently, *no* state is a "free" or a "people's state". Marx and Engels explained this repeatedly to their party comrades in the 'seventies.

Fifthly, this very same work of Engels', of which everyone remembers the argument about the "withering away" of the state, also contains a disquisition on the significance of violent revolution. Engels' historical analysis of its role becomes a veritable panegyric on violent revolution. This "no one remembers", it is not good form in modern Socialist Parties to talk or even think about the importance of this idea, and it plays no part whatever in their daily propaganda and agitation among

the masses And yet, it is inseparably bound up with the "withering away" of the state into one harmonious whole

Here is Engels' argument

"That force, however, plays yet another role [other than that of a diabolical power] in history, a revolutionary role, that, in the words of Marx, it is the midwife of every old society which is pregnant with the new, that it is the instrument by the aid of which the social movement forces its way through and shatters the dead, fossilised, political forms—of this there is not a word in Herr Dühring. It is only with sighs and groans that he admits the possibility that force will perhaps be necessary for the overthrow of the economic system of exploitation—unfortunately, because all use of force, forsooth, demoralises the person who uses it. And this in spite of the immense moral and spiritual impetus which has resulted from every victorious revolution! And this in Germany, where a violent collision—which indeed may be forced on the people—would at least have the advantage of wiping out the servility which has permeated the national consciousness as a result of the humiliation of the Thirty Years War. And this person's mode of thought—lifeless insipid and impotent—claims to impose itself on the most revolutionary party which history has known!"¹

How can this panegyric on violent revolution, which Engels insistently brought to the attention of the German Social-democrats between 1878 and 1894, *i.e.*, right up to the time of his death, be combined with the theory of the "withering away" of the state to form a single doctrine?

Usually the two views are combined by means of eclecticism, by an unprincipled, or sophistic, arbitrary selection (or a selection to please the powers that be) of one or another argument, and in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred (if not more often), it is the idea of the "withering away" that is specially emphasised. Eclecticism is substituted for dialectics—this is the most usual, the most widespread phenomenon to be met with in present-day official Social-Democratic literature on Marxism. This sort of substitution is not new, of course, it is observed even in the history of classic Greek philosophy. In painting Marxism to look like opportunism, the substitution of eclecticism for dialectics is the best method of deceiving the masses, it gives an illusory satisfaction, it seems to take into account all sides of the process, all tendencies of development, all the conflicting influences, and so forth, whereas in reality it presents no consistent and revolutionary conception of the process of social development at all.

We have already said above, and shall show more fully later, that the doctrine of Marx and Engels concerning the inevitability of a violent revolution refers to the bourgeois state. The latter *cannot* be superseded by the proletarian state (the dictatorship of the proletariat) in the process of "withering away", as a general

¹ *Ibid*, Part II, chap. IV, ("The Force Theory—Conclusion") —
Ed. Eng. ed

rule, this can happen only by means of a violent revolution. The panegyric Engels sang in its honour, and which fully corresponds to Marx's repeated declarations (recall the concluding passages of *The Poverty of Philosophy* and *The Communist Manifesto*, with their proud and open declaration of the inevitability of a violent revolution, recall Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* of 1875, in which, almost thirty years later, he mercilessly castigates the opportunist character of that programme)—this panegyric is by no means a mere "impulse," a mere declamation or a polemical sally. The necessity of systematically imbuing the masses with *this* and precisely this view of violent revolution lies at the root of the whole of Marx's and Engels' doctrine. The betrayal of their doctrine by the now predominant social-chauvinist and Kautskyan trends is brought out in striking relief by the neglect of *such* propaganda and agitation by both these trends.

The substitution of the proletarian state for the bourgeois state is impossible without a violent revolution. The abolition of the proletarian state, *i.e.*, of the state in general, is impossible except through the process of "withering away."

Marx and Engels fully and concretely enlarged on these views in studying each revolutionary situation separately, in analysing the lessons of the experience of each individual revolution. We shall now proceed to discuss this, undoubtedly the most important part of their doctrine.

CHAPTER II THE STATE AND REVOLUTION THE EXPERIENCE OF 1848-51

1 THE EVE OF THE REVOLUTION

THE first works of mature Marxism—*The Poverty of Philosophy* and *The Communist Manifesto*—appeared on the eve of the Revolution of 1848. For this reason, in addition to presenting the general principles of Marxism, they reflect to a certain degree the concrete revolutionary situation of the time. Hence, it will be more expedient, perhaps, to examine what the authors of these works said about the state immediately before they drew conclusions from the experience of the years 1848-51.

In *The Poverty of Philosophy* Marx wrote

"The working class in the course of its development will substitute for the old civil society an association which will exclude classes and their antagonism, and there will be no more political power properly so-called, since political power is precisely the official expression of antagonism in civil society."¹

¹ Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*, chap. II, sec. 5—Ed. Eng. ed. 2, 3

It is instructive to compare this general statement of the idea of the state disappearing after classes have been abolished with the statement contained in *The Communist Manifesto*, written by Marx and Engels a few months later—to be exact, in November 1847

“In depicting the most general phases of the development of the proletariat we traced the more or less veiled civil war, raging within existing society, up to the point where that war breaks out into open revolution, and where the violent overthrow of the bourgeoisie lays the foundation for the sway of the proletariat”¹

“We have seen above that the first step in the revolution by the working class is to raise the proletariat to the position of ruling class, to win the battle of democracy”

“The proletariat will use its political supremacy to wrest, by degrees, all capital from the bourgeoisie, to centralise all instruments of production in the hands of the state, i.e., of the proletariat organised as the ruling class, and to increase the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible”²

Here we have a formulation of one of the most remarkable and most important ideas of Marxism on the subject of the state, namely, the idea of the “dictatorship of the proletariat” (as Marx and Engels began to call it after the Paris Commune), and also a very interesting definition of the state which also belongs to the category of the “forgotten words” of Marxism “the state,” i.e. “the proletariat organised as the ruling class”

This definition of the state has never been explained in the prevailing propaganda and agitation literature of the official Social-Democratic Parties. More than that, it has been forgotten, for it is absolutely irreconcilable with reformism, and is a slap in the face of the common opportunist prejudices and philistine illusions about the “peaceful development of democracy”

The proletariat needs the state—this is repeated by all the opportunists, social-chauvinists and Kautskyists, who assure us that this is what Marx taught. But they “forget” to add that, in the first place according to Marx, the proletariat needs only a state which is withering away, i.e., a state so constituted that it begins to wither away immediately, and cannot but wither away. Secondly, the toilers need a “state,” i.e., “the proletariat organised as the ruling class”

The state is a special organisation of force, it is the organisation of violence for the suppression of some class. What class must the proletariat suppress? Naturally, only the exploiting class, i.e., the bourgeoisie. The toilers need a state only to overcome the resistance of the exploiters, and only the proletariat can direct this suppression, carry it out, for the proletariat is the

¹ *The Communist Manifesto, Part I* (“Bourgeois and Proletarians”) Ed. Eng. ed

² *Ibid., Part II* (“Proletarians and Communists”)—Ed. Eng. ed

only class that is consistently revolutionary, the only class that can unite all the toilers and the exploited in the struggle against the bourgeoisie, in completely displacing it

The exploiting classes need political rule in order to maintain exploitation, *i.e.*, in the selfish interests of an insignificant minority and against the interests of the vast majority of the people. The exploited classes need political rule in order completely to abolish all exploitation, *i.e.*, in the interests of the vast majority of the people, and against the interests of the insignificant minority consisting of the modern slave-owners—the landlords and the capitalists

The petty-bourgeois democrats, those alleged Socialists who substituted dreams of class harmony for the class struggle, even pictured the socialist reformation in a dreamy fashion—not in the form of the overthrow of the rule of the exploiting class, but in the form of the peaceful submission of the minority to the majority which has become conscious of its aims. This petty-bourgeois utopia, which is inseparably bound up with the idea of the state being above classes, led in practice to the betrayal of the interests of the toiling classes, as was shown, for example, by the history of the French revolutions of 1848 and 1871, and by the “Socialists” joining bourgeois cabinets in England, France, Italy and other countries at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries

Marx fought all his life against this petty-bourgeois socialism—now resurrected in Russia by the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik Parties. He logically pursued his doctrine of the class struggle to the doctrine of political power, the doctrine of the state

The overthrow of bourgeois rule can be accomplished only by the proletariat, as the particular class whose economic conditions of existence train it for this task and provide it with the opportunity and the power to perform it. While the bourgeoisie breaks up and disintegrates the peasantry and all the petty-bourgeois strata, it welds together, unites and organises the proletariat. Only the proletariat—by virtue of the economic role it plays in large-scale production—is capable of acting as the leader of *all* the toiling and exploited masses, whom the bourgeoisie exploits, oppresses and crushes not less, and often more, than it does the proletarians, but who are incapable of waging an *independent* struggle for their emancipation

The doctrine of the class struggle, as applied by Marx to the question of the state and of the socialist revolution, leads inevitably to the recognition of the *political rule* of the proletariat, of its dictatorship, *i.e.* of power shared with none and relying directly

upon the armed force of the masses. The overthrow of the bourgeoisie can be achieved only by the proletariat becoming transformed into the *ruling* class, capable of crushing the inevitable and desperate resistance of the bourgeoisie and of organising *all* the toiling and exploited masses for the new economic order.

The proletariat needs state power, the centralised organisation of force, the organisation of violence, for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of *leading* the great mass of the population—the peasantry the petty bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organising socialist economy.

By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat which is capable of assuming power and of *leading the whole people* to socialism, of directing and organising the new order, of being the teacher, guide and leader of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie. As against this, the now prevailing opportunism breeds in the ranks of the workers' party representatives of the better-paid workers, who lose touch with the rank and file, 'get along' fairly well under capitalism, and sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, *i.e.* renounce their role of revolutionary leaders of the people against the bourgeoisie.

Marx's theory: "The state, *i.e.*, the proletariat organised as the ruling class, is inseparably bound up with all he taught on the revolutionary role of the proletariat in history. The culmination of this role is the proletarian dictatorship, the political rule of the proletariat."

But if the proletariat needs a state as a *special* form of organisation of violence *against* the bourgeoisie, the following deduction automatically arises: is it conceivable that such an organisation can be created without first abolishing, destroying the state machine created by the bourgeoisie for *itself*? *The Communist Manifesto* leads straight to this deduction, and it is of this deduction that Marx speaks when summing up the experience of the Revolution of 1848-51.

2 THE REVOLUTION SUMMED UP

Marx sums up the Revolution of 1848-51, in connection with the question of the state we are concerned with in the following passage in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

"But the revolution is thoroughgoing. It is still in process of passing through purgatory. It does its work methodically. By December 2, 1851 [the day of Louis Bonaparte's *coup d'état*], it had completed one-half of its preparatory work; it is now completing the other half. First it perfected the parliamentary power, in order to be able to
22 ;

overthrow it. Now that it has attained this, it perfects the *executive power*, reduces it to its purest expression, isolates it, sets it up against itself as the sole target, in order to *concentrate all its forces of destruction against it* [italics ours]. And when it has done this second half of its preliminary work, Europe will leap from her seat and exultantly exclaim: well grubbed, old mole!

"This executive power with its monstrous bureaucratic and military organisation, with its artificial state machinery embracing wide strata, with a host of officials numbering half a million, besides an army of another half million, this appalling parasitic growth, which enmeshes the body of French society like a net and chokes all its pores, sprang up in the days of the absolute monarchy, with the decay of the feudal system, which it helped to hasten." The first French Revolution developed centralisation, "but at the same time [it developed] the extent, the attributes and the agents of governmental authority. Napoleon perfected this state machinery." The legitimist monarchy and the July monarchy "added nothing but a greater division of labour."

"The parliamentary republic finally, in its struggle against the revolution found itself compelled to strengthen, along with the repressive measures, the resources, and centralisation of governmental power. *All the revolutions perfected this machine instead of smashing it up* [italics ours]. The parties that contended in turn for domination regarded the possession of this huge state edifice as the principal spoils of the victor!"¹

In this remarkable passage Marxism takes a tremendous step forward compared with *The Communist Manifesto*. In the latter, the question of the state is still treated in an extremely abstract manner, in the most general terms and expressions. In the above-quoted passage, the question is treated in a concrete manner, and the conclusion is most precise, definite, practical and palpable: all the revolutions which have occurred up to now have helped to perfect the state machine, whereas it must be smashed, broken.

This conclusion is the chief and fundamental thesis in the Marxian doctrine of the state. And it is precisely this fundamental thesis which has been not only completely forgotten by the predominant official Social-democratic Parties, but positively distorted (as we shall see later) by the foremost theoretician of the Second International, K. Kautsky.

The Communist Manifesto gives a general summary of history, which compels us to regard the state as the organ of class rule and leads us to the inevitable conclusion that the proletariat cannot overthrow the bourgeoisie without first capturing political power, without attaining political supremacy, without transforming the state into the "proletariat organised as the ruling class", it inevitably leads to the conclusion that this proletarian state will begin to wither away immediately after its victory, because the state is unnecessary and cannot exist in a society in which there are no class antagonisms. The question as to how,

¹ *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, chap VII—Ed. Eng. ed.
[23

from the point of view of historical development, the substitution of the proletarian state for the bourgeois state is to take place is not raised

Marx raises this question and answers it in 1852¹ True to his philosophy of dialectical materialism, Marx takes as his basis the experience of the great years of revolution, 1848 to 1851 Here, as everywhere, his teaching is the *summary of experience*, illuminated by a profound philosophical conception of the world and a rich knowledge of history

The problem of the state is put concretely how did the bourgeois state, the state machine necessary for the rule of the bourgeoisie, come into being historically? What changes did it undergo, what evolution did it undergo in the course of the bourgeois revolutions and in the face of the independent actions of the oppressed classes? What are the tasks of the proletariat in relation to this state machine?

The centralised state power that is peculiar to bourgeois society came into being in the period of the fall of absolutism Two institutions are most characteristic of this state machine bureaucracy and a standing army In their works, Marx and Engels repeatedly mention the thousand threads which connect these institutions with the bourgeoisie The experience of every worker illustrates this connection in an extremely striking and impressive manner From its own bitter experience, the working class learns to recognise this connection that is why it learns so quickly and why it so completely assimilates the doctrine which reveals this inevitable connection, a doctrine which the petty-bourgeois democrats either ignorantly and light-heartedly deny, or still more light-heartedly, admit "in general," forgetting to draw the corresponding practical conclusions

The bureaucracy and the standing army are a "parasite" on the body of bourgeois society—a parasite created by the inherent antagonisms which rend that society, but a parasite which "chokes all its pores" of life The Kautskyan opportunism now prevalent in official Social-democracy considers the view that the state is a *parasitic growth* to be the peculiar and exclusive attribute of anarchism Naturally, this distortion of Marxism is extremely useful to those Philistines who have so utterly disgraced socialism by justifying and embellishing the imperialist war with the term "national defence", but it is an absolute distortion nevertheless

The development, perfection and strengthening of the bureaucratic and military apparatus proceeded during all the numerous bourgeois revolutions which Europe has witnessed since the fall

¹ I.e., in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*—Ed

of feudalism. It is precisely the petty bourgeoisie that is attracted to the side of the big bourgeoisie and is subordinated to it to a large extent by means of this apparatus, which provides the upper strata of the peasantry, small artisans and tradesmen with a number of comparatively comfortable, quiet and respectable jobs which raise their holders *above* the people. Consider what happened in Russia during the six months following March 12 [February 27], 1917. The governmental posts which hitherto had been given by preference to members of the Black Hundreds now became the spoils of the Cadets, Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries. Nobody really thought of introducing any serious reforms, every effort was made to put them off "until the Constituent Assembly was convened", and to put off the convocation of the Constituent Assembly until the end of the war! But there was no delay, no waiting for the Constituent Assembly in the matter of dividing the spoils, of getting the posts of ministers, vice-ministers, governors-general, etc., etc! The game of combinations that was played in forming the government was, in essence, only an expression of this division and re-division of the "spoils," which was going on high and low, throughout the country, in every department of central and local government. The six months between March 12 [February 27] and September 9 [August 27], 1917, can be summed up, objectively summed up beyond all dispute, as follows: reforms shelved, distribution of official posts accomplished and "mistakes" in the distribution corrected by a few re-distributions.

But the more the bureaucratic apparatus is "re-distributed" among the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties (among the Cadets, Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, if we take the case of Russia), the more clearly the oppressed classes, with the proletariat at their head, become conscious of their irreconcilable hostility to the *whole* of bourgeois society. That is why it is necessary for all bourgeois parties, even for the most democratic and "revolutionary-democratic" parties, to increase their repressive measures against the revolutionary proletariat, to strengthen the apparatus of repression, *i.e.*, the state machine that we are discussing. This course of events compels the revolution "*to concentrate all its forces of destruction*" against the state power, and to regard the problem, not as one of perfecting the state machine, but one of *smashing and destroying it*.

It was not logical reasoning, but the actual development of events, the living experience of 1848-51, that led to the problem being presented in this way. The extent to which Marx held strictly to the solid ground of historical experience can be seen from the fact that, in 1852, he did not yet deal concretely with the

question of *what* was to take the place of the state machine that was to be destroyed. Experience had not yet provided material for the solution of this problem, which history placed on the order of the day later on, in 1871. In 1852 it was possible only to establish with the accuracy of scientific observation that the proletarian revolution *had approached* the task of "concentrating all its forces of destruction" against the state, of "breaking" the state machine.

Here the question may arise: is it correct to generalise the experience, observations and conclusions of Marx, to apply them to a field that is wider than the history of France during the three years 1848-51? Before proceeding to answer this question we shall recall a remark made by Engels, and then we shall proceed to examine the facts. In his introduction to the third edition of *The Eighteenth Brumaire* Engels wrote:

France is the land where, more than anywhere else, the historical class struggles were each time fought out to a decision, and where, consequently, the changing political forms within which they occur and in which their results are summarised have likewise been stamped with the sharpest outlines. The centre of feudalism in the Middle Ages, the model country of centralised monarchy resting on estates since the Renaissance, France has demolished feudalism in the Great Revolution and established the unalloyed rule of the bourgeoisie in a classical purity unequalled by any other European land. And the struggle of the upward striving proletariat against the ruling bourgeoisie also appeared here in its acute form unknown elsewhere."

The last sentence is out of date, inasmuch as a lull has occurred in the revolutionary struggle of the French proletariat since 1871, although long as this lull may be it does not preclude the possibility that, in the coming proletarian revolution, France may once again reveal itself as the classic land of the class struggle to a decision.

Let us, however, cast a general glance over the history of the advanced countries at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. We shall see that the same process has been going on more slowly in more varied forms, on a much wider field: on the one hand, the development of "parliamentary power" in the republican countries (France, America, Switzerland) as well as in the monarchies (England, Germany to a certain extent, Italy, the Scandinavian countries, etc.), on the other hand, a struggle for power between the various bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties which distribute and re-distribute the "spoils" of office, while the foundations of bourgeois society remain unchanged. Finally, the perfection and consolidation of the "executive power," its bureaucratic and military apparatus.

There is not the slightest doubt that these features are common to the whole of the modern evolution of all capitalist states in

general In the three years 1848-51 France displayed, in a swift, sharp, concentrated form, all the processes of development which are peculiar to the whole capitalist world

Imperialism—the era of bank capital, the era of gigantic capitalist monopolies, the era of the transformation of monopoly capitalism into state-monopoly capitalism—has particularly witnessed an unprecedented strengthening of the “state machine” and an unprecedented growth of its bureaucratic and military apparatus, in connection with the increase in repressive measures against the proletariat in the monarchical as well as in the freest republican countries

World history is now undoubtedly leading to the “concentration of all the forces” of the proletarian revolution on the “destruction” of the state machine on an incomparably larger scale than in 1852

What the proletariat will put in its place is indicated by the extremely instructive material provided by the Paris Commune

3 THE PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION BY MARX IN 1852¹

In 1907, Mehring, in the magazine *Neue Zeit*² (Vol XXV, 2, p 164), published extracts from a letter from Marx to Weydemeyer dated March 5, 1852 This letter, among other things, contains the following remarkable observation

“And now as to myself, no credit is due to me for discovering the existence of classes of modern society, nor yet the struggle between them Long before me, bourgeois historians had described the historical development of this class struggle and bourgeois economists the economic anatomy of the classes What I did that was new was to prove 1) that the *existence of classes is only bound up with particular historical phases in the development of production* [*historische Entwicklungsphasen der Produktion*], 2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the *dictatorship of the proletariat* 3) that this dictatorship itself only constitutes the transition to the *abolition of all classes and to a classless society*”³

In these words Marx succeeded in expressing with striking clarity first, the chief and radical difference between his doctrine and those of the most advanced and most profound thinkers of the bourgeoisie and, second, the essence of his doctrine of the state

It is often said and written that the core of Marx's theory is the class struggle, but it is not true And from this error, very often, springs the opportunist distortion of Marxism, its falsification to make it acceptable to the bourgeoisie The theory of the

¹ This section was added by Lenin in the second Russian edition of *The State and Revolution*, 1918 —Ed

² *New Times* the theoretical organ of the Social Democratic Party of Germany —Ed

³ *The Correspondence of Marx and Engels* —Ed Eng ed

class struggle was *not* created by Marx, but by the bourgeoisie *before* Marx, and generally speaking it is *acceptable* to the bourgeoisie. Those who recognise *only* the class struggle are not yet Marxists, those may be found to have gone no further than the boundaries of bourgeois reasoning and bourgeois politics. To limit Marxism to the theory of the class struggle means curtailing Marxism distorting it reducing it to something which is acceptable to the bourgeoisie. A Marxist is one who *extends* the acceptance of the class struggle to the acceptance of *the dictatorship of the proletariat*. This is where the profound difference lies between a Marxist and an ordinary petty (and even big) bourgeois. This is the touchstone on which the *real* understanding and acceptance of Marxism should be tested. And it is not surprising that when the history of Europe brought the working class face to face with this question in a *practical* way, not only all the opportunists and reformists, but all the Kautskyists (those who vacillate between reformism and Marxism) proved to be miserable Philistines and petty-bourgeois democrats who *repudiated* the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky's pamphlet, *The Dictatorship of the Proletariat*, published in August, 1918, *i.e.*, long after the first edition of the present pamphlet, is an example of the petty-bourgeois distortion of Marxism and base renunciation of it *in practice*, while hypocritically recognising it *in words* (see my pamphlet, *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*, Petrograd and Moscow, 1918¹).

Present-day opportunism in the person of its principal representative, the ex-Marxist, K. Kautsky, fits in completely with Marx's characterisation of the *bourgeois* position as quoted above, for this opportunism limits the field of recognition of the class struggle to the realm of bourgeois relationships. (Within this realm, within its framework, not a single educated liberal will refuse to recognise the class struggle "in principle"!.) Opportunism *does not* carry the recognition of class struggle to the main point, to the period of *transition* from capitalism to communism, to the period of the *overthrow* and complete abolition of the bourgeoisie. In reality, this period inevitably becomes a period of unusually violent class struggles in their sharpest possible forms and, therefore, during this period, the state must inevitably be a state that is democratic *in a new way* (for the proletariat and the propertyless in general) and dictatorial *in a new way* (against the bourgeoisie).

To proceed. The essence of Marx's doctrine of the state is assimilated only by those who understand that the dictatorship of a *single* class is necessary not only for class society in general,

¹ Vol. 18 in "Little Lenin Library," Lawrence & Wishart, London.
28] —Ed

not only for the *proletariat* which has overthrown the bourgeoisie, but for the entire *historical period* between capitalism and "classless society," communism. The forms of the bourgeois state are extremely varied, but in essence they are all the same, in one way or another, in the last analysis, all these states are inevitably the *dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. The transition from capitalism to communism will certainly create a great variety and abundance of political forms, but in essence there will inevitably be only one — *the dictatorship of the proletariat*.

CHAPTER III

THE STATE AND REVOLUTION EXPERIENCE OF THE PARIS COMMUNE OF 1871 MARX'S ANALYSIS

1 WHEREIN LAY THE HEROISM OF THE COMMUNARDS' ATTEMPT?

It is well-known that in the autumn of 1870, a few months before the Commune, Marx warned the Paris workers that an attempt to overthrow the government would be desperate folly. But when, in March 1871, a decisive battle was *forced* upon the workers and they accepted it, when the uprising had become a fact, Marx greeted the proletarian revolution with the greatest enthusiasm, in spite of unfavourable auguries. Marx did not assume the rigid attitude of pedantically condemning a "premature" movement, as did the ill-famed Russian renegade from Marxism, Plekhanov, who, in November 1905, wrote encouragingly about the workers' and peasants' struggle but, after December 1905, cried, liberal fashion "They should not have taken to arms"¹

Marx, however, was not only enthusiastic about the heroism of the Communards who "stormed the heavens," as he expressed it. Although it did not achieve its aim, he regarded the mass revolutionary movement as a historic experiment of gigantic importance, as an advance of the world proletarian revolution, as a practical step that was more important than hundreds of programmes and discussions. Marx conceived his task to be to analyse this experiment, to draw lessons in tactics from it, to re-examine his theory in the new light it afforded.

Marx made the only "correction" he thought it necessary to make in *The Communist Manifesto* on the basis of the revolutionary experience of the Paris Communards.

The last preface to the new German edition of *The Communist Manifesto* signed by both its authors is dated June 24, 1872. In this preface the authors, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, say that the programme of *The Communist Manifesto* "has in some details become antiquated" now, and they go on to say

"One thing especially was proved by the Commune, viz., that 'the

¹ See *Selected Works* Vol III, p 348 —Ed

working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes' "

The authors took the words in single quotation marks in the above-quoted passage from Marx's book, *The Civil War in France*

Thus, Marx and Engels regarded one of the principal and fundamental lessons of the Paris Commune as being of such enormous importance that they introduced it as a vital correction in *The Communist Manifesto*

It is extremely characteristic that it is precisely this vital correction that has been distorted by the opportunists and its meaning, probably, is not known to nine-tenths if not ninety-nine-hundredths, of the readers of *The Communist Manifesto*. We shall deal with this distortion more fully further on, in a chapter devoted specially to distortions. Here it will be sufficient to note that the current vulgar "interpretation" of Marx's famous utterance quoted above is that Marx here emphasises the idea of gradual development in contradistinction to the seizure of power, and so on

As a matter of fact, *exactly the opposite is the case*. Marx's idea is that the working class must *break up, smash* the "ready-made state machinery, and not confine itself merely to laying hold of it

On April 12, 1871, i.e. just at the time of the Commune, Marx wrote to Kugelmann

"If you look at the last chapter of my *Eighteenth Brumaire*, you will find that I say that the next attempt of the French Revolution will be no longer as before, to transfer the bureaucratic-military machine from one hand to another but to *smash* it [Marx's italics—the original is *zerbrechen*], and this is essential for every real people's revolution on the Continent. And this is what our heroic Party comrades in Paris are attempting' ¹

The words, "to smash" "the bureaucratic-military state machine," briefly express the principal lesson of Marxism on the tasks of the proletariat in relation to the state during a revolution. And it is precisely this lesson that has been not only completely forgotten, but positively distorted, in the prevailing Kautskyan "interpretation" of Marxism

As for Marx's reference to *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, we quoted the corresponding passage in full above

It is interesting to note two particular points in the above-quoted passage in Marx's argument. First, he confines his conclusions to the Continent. This was natural in 1871, when

¹ *Neue Zeit*, Vol XX, 1, 1901-02, p 709. The letters of Marx to Kugelmann have come out in Russian in no less than two editions, one of them edited and with an introduction by me. (See *Letters to Dr. Kugelmann*—Ed Eng ed)

England was still the model of a purely capitalist country, but without militarism and, to a considerable degree, without a bureaucracy. Hence, Marx excluded England, where a revolution, even a people's revolution could be conceived of, and was then possible, *without* the condition of first destroying the "ready-made state machinery"

To-day, in 1917, in the epoch of the first great imperialist war, Marx's exception is no longer valid. Both England and America, the greatest and last representatives of the Anglo-Saxon "liberty," in the sense that militarism and bureaucracy are absent, have to-day plunged headlong into the all-European, filthy, bloody morass of bureaucratic-military institutions to which everything is subordinated and which trample everything under foot. To-day, both in England and America, the "essential" thing for "every real people's revolution" is the *smashing* the *destruction* of the "ready-made state machinery" (brought in those countries, between 1914 and 1917, to general "European" imperialist perfection)

Secondly, particular attention should be paid to Marx's extremely profound remark that the destruction of the military and bureaucratic state machine is "essential for every real *people's* revolution." This idea of a "people's" revolution seems strange coming from Marx, and the Russian Plekhanovists and Mensheviks, those followers of Struve who wish to be regarded as Marxists, might possibly declare such an expression to be a "slip of the pen." They have reduced Marxism to such a state of wretched "liberal" distortion that nothing exists for them beyond the antithesis between bourgeois revolution and proletarian revolution—and even this antithesis they interpret in an entirely lifeless way.

If, for example, we take the revolutions of the twentieth century, we shall, of course, have to admit that the Portuguese and the Turkish revolutions are bourgeois revolutions. Neither, however, is a "people's" revolution, inasmuch as in neither of them does the mass of the people, the enormous majority, come out actively, independently, with its own economic and political demands. On the other hand, although the Russian bourgeois revolution of 1905-07 presented no such "brilliant" successes as at times fell to the lot of the Portuguese and Turkish revolutions, it was undoubtedly a "real people's" revolution, since the mass of the people, the majority, the "lowest social ranks," crushed by oppression and exploitation, rose independently, since they put on the entire course of the revolution the impress of *their* demands, of *their* attempts to build in their own way a new society in place of the old society that was being destroyed.

„In Europe, in 1871, there was not a single country on the Continent in which the proletariat constituted the majority of the people. A “people’s” revolution, that swept actually the majority into its stream, could be such only if it embraced the proletariat and the peasantry. Both classes then constituted the “people.” Both classes were united by the fact that the “bureaucratic-military state machine” oppressed, crushed, exploited them. To *smash* this machine, to *break it up*—this is what is truly in the interests of the “people,” of the majority: the workers and most of the peasants: this is what is “essential” for the free alliance between the poor peasantry and the proletarians, without such an alliance democracy is unstable and the socialist reformation is impossible.

As is well known, the Paris Commune strove for such an alliance, although it failed to achieve it owing to a number of circumstances: internal and external.

Consequently, in speaking of a “real people’s revolution,” Marx, without in the least forgetting the peculiar characteristics of the petty bourgeoisie (he spoke a great deal about them and often) very carefully took into account the class relations that actually existed in the majority of continental countries in Europe in 1871. On the other hand, he asserted that the “smashing” of the state machine was necessary in the interests of the workers and of the peasants, that it unites them, that it places before them the common task of removing the “parasite” and of substituting something new for it.

What exactly?

2 WHAT IS TO SUPERSEDE THE SMASHED STATE MACHINE?

In 1847 in *The Communist Manifesto*, Marx’s answer to this question was still a purely abstract one, or, to speak more correctly, it was an answer that indicated the problem, but did not solve it. The answer given in *The Communist Manifesto* was that “the proletariat organised as the ruling class” “to win the battle of democracy” was to be the substitute for this machine.

Marx did not drop into Utopia: he expected the *experience* of the mass movement to provide the reply to the question of the exact forms the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class will assume and the exact manner in which this organisation will be combined with the most complete, most consistent winning of “the battle of democracy.”

Marx subjected the experience of the Commune, meagre as it was, to the most careful analysis in *The Civil War in France*. Let us quote the most important passages of this work.

There developed in the nineteenth century, he says, originating

from the days of the Middle Ages, "the centralised state power, with its ubiquitous organs of standing army, police, bureaucracy, clergy and judicature" With the development of class antagonisms between capital and labour "the state power assumed more and more the character of the national power of capital over labour, of a public force organised for social enslavement, of an engine of class despotism After every revolution marking a progressive phase in the class struggle, the purely repressive character of the state power stands out in bolder and bolder relief" After the Revolution of 1848-49, the state power became "the national war engine of capital against labour" The Second Empire consolidated this

"The direct antithesis to the Empire was the Commune," says Marx It was the "positive form" of "a republic that was not only to supersede the monarchical form of class rule, but class rule itself

What was this "positive" form of the proletarian, the socialist republic? What was the state it was beginning to create?

"The first decree of the Commune was the suppression of the standing army, and the substitution for it of the armed people," says Marx

This demand now figures in the programme of every party calling itself Socialist But the value of their programmes is best shown by the behaviour of our Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, who, precisely after the revolution of March 12 [February 27], 1917, refused to carry out this demand!

"The Commune was formed of the municipal councillors, chosen by universal suffrage in the various wards of the town, responsible and revocable at short terms The majority of its members were naturally working men, or acknowledged representatives of the working class Instead of continuing to be the agent of the Central Government, the police was at once stripped of its political attributes, and turned into the responsible and at all times revocable agent of the Commune So were the officials of all other branches of the administration From the members of the Commune downwards, the public service had to be done at *workmen's wages* The vested interests and the representation allowances of the high dignitaries of state disappeared along with the high dignitaries themselves

"Having once got rid of the standing army and the police, the physical force elements of the old government, the Commune was anxious to break the spiritual force of repression, the 'parson-power'

"The judicial functionaries were to be divested of [their] sham independence Like the rest of the public servants, magistrates and judges were to be elective, responsible and revocable"¹

Thus the Commune appears to have substituted "only" fuller democracy for the smashed state machine abolition of the

¹ *The Civil War in France* Lawrence & Wishart, pp 40 41 —Ed
B

standing army, all officials to be elected and subject to recall. But as a matter of fact this "only" signifies the very important substitution of one type of institution for others of a fundamentally different order. This is a case of "quantity becoming transformed into quality." democracy, introduced as fully and consistently as is generally conceivable, is transformed from bourgeois democracy into proletarian democracy from the state (*i.e.* a special force for the suppression of a particular class) into something which is no longer really a state.

It is still necessary to suppress the bourgeoisie and crush its resistance. This was particularly necessary for the Commune, and one of the reasons for its defeat was that it did not do this with sufficient determination. But the organ of suppression is now the majority of the population, and not the minority, as was always the case under slavery, serfdom and wage-slavery. And since the majority of the people *itself* suppresses its oppressors, a "special force" for suppression is *no longer necessary*. In this sense the state *begins to wither away*. Instead of the special institutions of a privileged minority (privileged officialdom, heads of the standing army), the majority itself can directly fulfil all these functions, and the more the functions of state power devolve upon the people generally, the less need is there for the existence of this power.

In this connection the measures adopted by the Commune and emphasised by Marx are particularly noteworthy, *viz.*, the abolition of all representation allowances, and of all monetary privileges in the case of officials, the reduction of the remuneration of *all* servants of the state to the level of "*workmen's wages*." This shows more clearly than anything else the *turn* from bourgeois democracy to proletarian democracy, from the democracy of the oppressors to the democracy of the oppressed classes, from the state as a "*special force*" for the suppression of a given class to the suppression of the oppressors by the *general force* of the majority of the people—the workers and the peasants. And it is precisely on this most striking point, perhaps the most important as far as the problem of the state is concerned, that the teachings of Marx have been most completely forgotten! In popular commentaries the number of which is legion, this is not mentioned. It is "good form" to keep silent about it as if it were a piece of old-fashioned "naiveté," just as the Christians, after Christianity had attained the position of a state religion, "forgot" the "naiveté" of primitive Christianity with its democratic revolutionary spirit.

The reduction of the remuneration of the highest state officials seems to be "simply" a demand of naive, primitive democracy. One of the "founders" of modern opportunism, the ex-Social-

34]

democrat, Eduard Bernstein, has more than once exercised his talents in repeating the vulgar bourgeois jeers at "primitive" democracy. Like all opportunists, including the present Kautskysts he utterly fails to understand that, first of all, the transition from capitalism to socialism is *impossible* without some "reversion" to "primitive" democracy (how else can the majority, and even the whole population, proceed to discharge state functions?), and secondly, he forgets that "primitive democracy" based on capitalism and capitalist culture is not the same as primitive democracy in prehistoric or pre-capitalist times. Capitalist culture has *created* large-scale production, factories, railways, the postal service, telephones, etc., and *on this basis* the great majority of functions of the old "state power" have become so simplified and can be reduced to such simple operations of registration, filing and checking, that they can be easily performed by every literate person, and it will be possible to perform them for "workmen's wages," which circumstances can (and must) strip those functions of every shadow of privilege, of every semblance of "official grandeur."

All officials, without exception, elected and subject to recall *at any time* their salaries reduced to the level of "workmen's wages"—these simple and "self-evident" democratic measures, while completely uniting the interests of the workers and the majority of the peasants, at the same time serve as the bridge between capitalism and socialism. These measures concern the purely political reconstruction of society but, of course, they acquire their full meaning and significance only in connection with the "expropriation of the expropriators," either accomplished or in preparation, *i.e.*, with the transformation of capitalist private ownership of the means of production into social ownership. Marx wrote

"The Commune made that catchword of bourgeois revolutions, cheap government, a reality by destroying the two greatest sources of expenditure—the standing army and state functionarism"¹

From the peasantry, as from other sections of the petty bourgeoisie only an insignificant few "rise to the top," "get on in the world" in the bourgeois sense, *i.e.*, become either well-to-do people, bourgeois or officials in secure and privileged position. In every capitalist country where there is a peasantry (and this is the case in most capitalist countries), the vast majority of the peasants is oppressed by the government and longs for its overthrow, longs for "cheap" government. This can be achieved *only* by the proletariat, and by achieving it, the proletariat at the same time takes a step forward towards the socialist reconstruction of the state

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

3 THE ABOLITION OF PARLIAMENTARISM

Marx said

'The Commune was to be a working not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time'

'Instead of deciding once in three or six years which member of the ruling class was to misrepresent the people in parliament, universal suffrage was to serve the people, constituted in Communes, as individual suffrage serves every other employer in search for the workmen and managers in his business''¹

Thanks to the prevalence of social-chauvinism and opportunism this remarkable criticism of parliamentarism made in 1871 also belongs now to the "forgotten words" of Marxism. The Cabinet Ministers and professional parliamentarians, the traitors to the proletariat and the "practical" Socialists of our day, have left all criticism of parliamentarism to the anarchists, and, on this wonderfully intelligent ground, they denounce *all* criticism of parliamentarism as "anarchism !" It is not surprising that the proletariat of the "advanced" parliamentary countries, disgusted with such "Socialists" as Messrs Scheidemann, David, Legien, Sembat, Renaudel, Henderson, Vandervelde, Stauning, Branting, Bissolati and Co, has been more and more often giving its sympathies to anarcho-syndicalism, in spite of the fact that the latter is but the twin brother of opportunism.

But for Marx, revolutionary dialectics was never the empty fashionable phrase, the toy rattle, which Plekhanov, Kautsky and the others have made of it. Marx knew how to break with anarchism ruthlessly for its inability to make use even of the "pigsty" of bourgeois parliamentarism, especially at a time when the situation was obviously not revolutionary, but at the same time he knew how to subject parliamentarism to genuine revolutionary-proletarian criticism.

To decide once every few years which member of the ruling class is to misrepresent the people in parliament is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics.

But since we are discussing the question of the state, and if parliamentarism is to be regarded as one of the institutions of the state from the point of view of the tasks of the proletariat in *this* field, what is the way out of parliamentarism? How can it be dispensed with?

Again and again we must repeat the lessons of Marx, based on the study of the Commune, have been so completely forgotten that any criticism of parliamentarism, other than anarchist or reactionary criticism, is quite unintelligible to the present-day "Social-democrat" (read *present-day traitor to socialism*)

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

The way out of parliamentarism is not, of course, the abolition of representative institutions and of the electoral principle, but the conversion of the representative institutions from mere "talking shops" into working bodies

"The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time"

"A working, not a parliamentary body"—this hits the nail on the head in regard to the present-day parliamentarians and the parliamentary "lap dogs" of Social-democracy¹ Take any parliamentary country, from America to Switzerland, from France to England, Norway and so forth—in these countries the actual work of the "state" is done behind the scenes and is carried on by the departments, the government offices and the General Staffs. Parliament itself is given up to talk for the special purpose of fooling the "common people." This is so true that even in the Russian republic, a bourgeois-democratic republic, all these sins of parliamentarism were immediately revealed, even before a real parliament was created. The heroes of rotten Philistinism, such as the Skobelevs and the Tseretellis, the Chernovs and Avksentyevs, have managed to pollute even the Soviets with the pollution of disgusting bourgeois parliamentarism and to convert them into mere talking shops. In the Soviets, the Right Honourable "Socialist" Ministers are fooling the confiding peasants with phrasemongering and resolutions. In the government itself a sort of permanent quadrille is going on in order that, on the one hand, as many Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks as possible may get near the "pie," the lucrative and honourable posts, and that, on the other hand, the "attention of the people" may be engaged. Meanwhile, the real "state" business is being done in the government offices, in the General Staff.

Dyelo Naroda,¹ the organ of the ruling Socialist-Revolutionary Party, recently admitted in an editorial article—with the matchless candour of people of "good society," in which "all" are engaged in political prostitution—that even in those Ministries of which the "Socialists" (save the mark) are at the head, the whole bureaucratic apparatus has in fact remained as before, that it is working in the old way, "freely" sabotaging revolutionary measures. Even without this admission, would not the actual history of the participation of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks in the government prove this? The only characteristic thing in this is that while in the Ministerial company of the Cadets, Messrs Chernov, Rusanov, Zenzinov and the other editors of *Dyelo Naroda* have so completely lost all shame that they unblushingly proclaim, as if it were a mere bagatelle, that

¹ *The People's Cause*—Ed Eng ed

in "then" Ministries everything has remained as before! Revolutionary-democratic phrases to gull the Simple Simons, bureaucracy and red tape for the "benefit" of the capitalists—this is the *essence* of the "honest" coalition

The Commune was to have substituted for the venal and rotten parliamentarism of bourgeois society institutions in which freedom of opinion and discussion would not have degenerated into deception, for the parliamentarians would have had to work themselves, would have had to execute their own laws, they themselves would have had to test their results in real life, they would have been directly responsible to their constituents. Representative institutions would have remained, but there was to have been *no* parliamentarism as a special system, as the division of labour between the legislative and the executive, as a privileged position for deputies. We cannot imagine democracy, not even proletarian democracy, without representative institutions but we can and *must* think of democracy without parliamentarism if criticism of bourgeois society is not mere empty words for us, if the desire to overthrow the rule of the bourgeoisie is our serious and sincere desire, and not a mere "election" cry for catching workers' votes, as it is with the Mensheviks and Social-Revolutionaries, the Scheidemanns, the Legiens, the Sembats and the Vanderveldes

It is extremely instructive to note that, in speaking of the functions of the officials who are *necessary* for the Commune and for proletarian democracy, Marx compares them to the workers of "every other employer" that is, of the ordinary capitalist enterprise, with its "workmen and managers"

There is no trace of utopianism in Marx, in the sense that he invented or imagined a "new society". No, he studied the *birth* of the new society *from* the old, the forms of transition from the latter to the former as a natural historical process. He examined the actual experience of the mass proletarian movement and tried to draw practical lessons from it. He "learned" from the Commune, like all the great revolutionary thinkers who were not afraid to learn from the experience of the great movements of the oppressed classes and who never preached pedantic "sermons" (such as Plekhanov's "They should not have taken to arms", or Tseretelli's "A class must limit itself")

There can be no thought of destroying officialdom immediately everywhere, completely. That is Utopia. But to *smash* the old bureaucratic machine at once and to begin immediately to construct a new one that will enable all officialdom to be gradually abolished is *not* Utopia, it is the experience of the Commune, it is the direct and immediate task of the revolutionary proletariat

Socialism simplifies the functions of "state" administration, it enables the methods of "official administration" to be thrown aside and the whole business to be reduced to a matter of organising the proletariat (as the ruling class), which hires "workmen and managers" in the name of the whole of society

We are not Utopians, we do not indulge in "dreams" of dispensing *at once* with all administration, with all subordination, these anarchist dreams, based upon a lack of understanding of the tasks of the proletarian dictatorship, are totally alien to Marxism, and, as a matter of fact, serve only to postpone the socialist revolution until human nature has changed. No, we want the socialist revolution with human nature as it is now, with human nature that cannot dispense with subordination, control and "managers"

But the subordination must be to the armed vanguard of all the exploited, of all the toilers, *i.e.* to the proletariat. Measures must be taken at once, overnight, to substitute for the specific methods of "official administration" by state officials the simple functions of "workmen and managers," functions which are *already fully within the capacity of the average city dweller* and can well be performed for "workmens' wages"

We ourselves the workers, will organise large-scale production on the basis of what capitalism has already created, we shall rely on our own experience as workers, we shall establish strict iron discipline supported by the state power of the armed workers, we shall reduce the role of the state officials to that of simply carrying out instructions as responsible, revocable, moderately paid "managers" (of course, with the aid of technicians of all sorts, types and degrees). This is our *proletarian* task, this is what we can and *must* start with in carrying out the proletarian revolution. Such a beginning, on the basis of large-scale production, will of itself lead to the gradual "withering away" of all bureaucracy, to the gradual creation of an order, order without quotation marks, which will be different from wage-slavery, an order in which the functions of control and accounting—becoming more and more simple—will be performed by each in turn, will then become a habit and will finally die out as the *special* functions of a special stratum of the population

A witty German Social-democrat of the seventies of the last century called the *post-office* an example of the socialist system. This is very true. At present the post-office is a business organised on the lines of a state *capitalist* monopoly. Imperialism is gradually transforming all trusts into organisations of a similar type. Over the "common" toilers, who are overworked and

starved there stands the same bourgeois bureaucracy. But the mechanism of social management is here already to hand. Overthrow the capitalists, crush the resistance of these exploiters with the iron hand of the armed workers, smash the bureaucratic machine of the modern state—and you will have a mechanism of the highest technical equipment, free from the “parasite,” capable of being wielded by the united workers themselves, who will hire their own technicians, managers and book-keepers, and pay them *all*, as, indeed *every* “state” official, ordinary workmen’s wages. Here is a concrete, practicable task, immediately possible of fulfilment in relation to all trusts, a task that frees the toilers from exploitation and takes into account what the Commune had already begun to carry out (particularly in the field of state construction).

Our immediate object is to organise the *whole* of national economy on the lines of the postal system, so that the technicians, managers bookkeepers as well as *all* officials, shall receive salaries no higher than “workmen’s wages,” all under the control and leadership of the armed proletariat. It is such a state, standing on such an economic basis, that we need. This is what will bring about the abolition of Parliamentarism and the preservation of representative institutions. This is what will rid the labouring classes of the prostitution of these institutions by the bourgeoisie.

4 THE ORGANISATION OF NATIONAL UNITY

“In a rough sketch of national organisation which the Commune had no time to develop it states clearly that the Commune was to be the political form of even the smallest country hamlet.”¹

The communes were to elect the “National Delegation” in Paris.

“The few but important functions which still would remain for a central government were not to be suppressed, as has been intentionally misstated but were to be discharged by Communal and therefore strictly responsible agents. The unity of the nation was not to be broken, but, on the contrary, to be organised by the Communal constitutions, and to become a reality by the destruction of the state power which claimed to be the embodiment of that unity independent of, and superior to the nation itself, from which it has but a parasitic excrescence. While the merely repressive organs of the old governmental power were to be amputated, its legitimate functions were to be wrested from an authority usurping pre-eminence over society itself, and restored to the responsible agents of society.”¹

To what extent the opportunists of present-day Social-democracy have failed to understand—or perhaps it would be more true to say, did not want to understand—these observations of Marx is best shown by the famous (the fame of Herostratus)

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

book of the renegade Bernstein, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*¹ It is precisely in connection with the above passage from Marx that Bernstein wrote that this programme

" in its political content, in all its essential features, displays the greatest similarity to the federation of Proudhon In spite of all the other points of difference between Marx and the 'petty-bourgeois' Proudhon [Bernstein places the word "petty-bourgeois" in quotation marks in order to make it sound ironical], on these points their ways of thinking resemble each other as closely as could be "

Of course, Bernstein continues, the importance of the municipalities is growing, but

" it seems doubtful to me whether the first task of democracy would be such a dissolution [*Auflösung*] of the modern states and such a complete transformation [*Umwandlung*] of their organisation as is described by Marx and Proudhon (the formation of a National Assembly from delegates of the provincial or district assemblies, which, in their turn, would consist of delegates from the Communes, so that the whole previous mode of national representation would vanish completely "

To confuse Marx's views on the "destruction of the state power"—of the "parasitic excrescence"—with Proudhon's federalism is positively monstrous! But it is not an accident, for it never occurs to the opportunist that Marx does not speak here about federalism as opposed to centralism, but about smashing the old bourgeois state machine which exists in all bourgeois countries

The only thing that penetrates the opportunist's mind is what he sees around him, in a society of petty-bourgeois Philistinism and "reformist" stagnation, namely, only "municipalities"! The opportunist has even forgotten how to think about the proletarian revolution

It is ridiculous But it is remarkable that nobody disputed Bernstein on this point! Bernstein has been refuted often enough, especially by Plekhanov in Russian literature and by Kautsky in European literature, but neither of them said *anything* about *this* distortion of Marx by Bernstein

The opportunist has forgotten to think in a revolutionary way and to ponder over revolution to such an extent that he attributes "federalism" to Marx and confuses him with the founder of anarchism, Proudhon And Kautsky and Plekhanov, the would-be orthodox Marxists and defenders of the doctrine of revolutionary Marxism, are silent on this point! Herein lies one of the roots of the extreme vulgarisation of the views concerning the difference between Marxism and anarchism which is

¹ *The Premises of Socialism and the Tasks of Social Democracy*—Herostratus, in order to acquire fame, burned down the temple of Diana at Ephesus—Ed Eng ed

characteristic of the Kautskyists and opportunists, and which we shall discuss later

Marx's observations on the experience of the Commune which we quoted above do not reveal a trace of federalism. Marx agreed with Proudhon on the very point that the opportunist Bernstein failed to see. Marx disagreed with Proudhon on the very point on which Bernstein said there was agreement.

Marx agreed with Proudhon on the necessity of "smashing" the present state machine. Neither the Kautskyists nor the opportunists wish to see this similarity between Marxism and anarchism (Proudhon and Bakunin) because on this point they have departed from Marxism.

Marx differed with Proudhon and with Bakunin precisely on the point of federalism (quite apart from the dictatorship of the proletariat). The petty-bourgeois views of anarchism advance federalism as a principle. Marx was a centralist. There is no departure from centralism in the observations of Marx quoted above. Only those who are imbued with the petty-bourgeois "superstitious belief" in the state can mistake the abolition of the bourgeois state machine for the abolition of centralism.

But will it not be centralism when the proletariat and poorest peasantry take political power in their own hands, organise themselves freely in communes, and *unite* the action of all the communes in striking at capital, in crushing the resistance of the capitalists in transferring the ownership of the railways, factories, land and so forth, to the *entire* nation, to the whole of society? Will that not be the most consistent democratic centralism? And proletarian centralism at that?

Bernstein simply cannot conceive the possibility of voluntary centralism, of the voluntary amalgamation of the communes into a nation, the voluntary fusion of the proletarian communes in the process of destroying bourgeois rule and the bourgeois state machine. Like all Philistines, Bernstein can imagine centralism only as something from above, to be imposed and maintained solely by means of bureaucracy and militarism.

Marx, as though foreseeing the possibility of the distortion of his ideas, deliberately emphasised the fact that the charge that the Commune desired to destroy the unity of the nation, to abolish the central power, was an intentional misstatement. Marx deliberately used the words "The unity of the nation was to be organised," so as to contrast conscious, democratic proletarian centralism with bourgeois, military, bureaucratic centralism.

But no one is so deaf as he who will not hear. And the very thing the opportunists of present-day Social-democracy do not

want to hear about is the abolition of state power, the excision of the parasite

5 THE ABOLITION OF THE PARASITE STATE

We have already quoted part of Marx's utterances on this subject, and we now supplement them. He wrote

"It is generally the fate of completely new historical creations to be mistaken for the counterpart of older and even defunct forms of social life, to which they may bear a certain likeness. Thus, this new Commune, which breaks the modern state power, has been mistaken for a reproduction of the mediæval Communes for a federation of small states, as dreamt of by Montesquieu and the Girondins for an exaggerated form of the ancient struggle against over-centralisation. The Communal constitution would have restored to the social body all the forces hitherto absorbed by the state parasite feeding upon and clogging the free movement of society. By this one act it would have initiated the regeneration of France. The Communal constitution brought the rural producers under the intellectual lead of the central towns of their districts, and there secured to them in the workingmen, the natural trustees of their interests. The very existence of the Commune involved, as a matter of course local municipal liberty, but no longer as a check upon the now superseded state power"¹

"Breaks the modern state power" which was a 'parasitic excrescence' the "repressive organs" of which were to be "amputated" the "destruction" of "the now superseded state power"—these are the expressions used by Marx concerning the state in appraising and analysing the experience of the Commune.

All this was written a little less than half a century ago, and now one has to make excavations, as it were to bring undistorted Marxism to the knowledge of the masses. The conclusions drawn from the observation of the last great revolution, through which Marx lived, were forgotten just at the moment when the time for the next great proletarian revolutions had arrived.

The multiplicity of interpretations to which the Commune has been subjected and the multiplicity of interests which construed it in their favour show that it was a thoroughly expansive political form, while all previous forms of government had been emphatically repressive. Its true secret was this. It was essentially a *working-class government* the product of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour.

"Except on this last condition the Communal constitution would have been an impossibility and a delusion"¹

The Utopians busied themselves with "inventing" the political forms under which the socialist transformation of society was to take place. The anarchists waived the question of political forms altogether. The opportunists of present-day Social-democracy accepted the bourgeois political forms of the parliamentary democratic state as the unsurpassable limit. They battered their

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

foreheads praying before this idol and denounced every attempt to *smash* these forms as anarchism

Marx deduced from the whole history of Socialism and of the political struggle that the state was bound to disappear, and that the transitional form of its disappearance (the transition from state to no state) would be the "proletariat organised as the ruling class" But Marx did not set out to *discover* the political forms of this future stage He limited himself to a precise observation of French history to analysing it, and to the conclusion to which the year 1851 had led, *viz.*, that matters were moving towards the *smashing* of the bourgeois state machine

And when the mass revolutionary movement of the proletariat burst forth Marx, in spite of the failure of that movement, in spite of its short life and its patent weakness, began to study the political forms that it had *disclosed*

The Commune is the form "at last discovered" by the proletarian revolution, under which to work out the economic emancipation of labour

The Commune is the first attempt of a proletarian revolution to *smash* the bourgeois state machine and it constitutes the political form, "at last discovered," which can and must *supersede* the smashed machine

We shall see below that the Russian Revolution of 1905 and 1917, in different circumstances and under different conditions continued the work of the Commune and corroborated Marx's brilliant historical analysis

CHAPTER IV

CONTINUATION SUPPLEMENTARY EXPLANATION BY ENGELS

MARX gave the fundamentals on the question of the significance of the experience of the Commune Engels returned to the same subject repeatedly and explained Marx's analysis and conclusions, sometimes illuminating *other* sides of the question with such strength and vividness that it is necessary to deal with his explanations separately

1 "THE HOUSING QUESTION"

In his work, *The Housing Question* (1872) Engels took into account the experience of the Commune, and dealt several times with the tasks of the revolution in relation to the state It is interesting to note that the treatment of this concrete subject revealed, on the one hand, points of similarity between the proletarian state and the present state—features which give

whole people to separate families presupposes the collection of rent, a certain amount of control, and a certain standard of allotment of houses. All this calls for a certain form of state, but it does not call for a special military and bureaucratic apparatus, with officials occupying especially privileged positions. The transition to a state of affairs when it will be possible to let houses rent-free is bound up with the complete "withering away" of the state.

Speaking of the conversion of the Blanquists to the principles of Marxism after the Commune and as a result of its experience, Engels, in passing, formulates these principles as follows:

"Necessity of political action of the proletariat, and of the dictatorship of the proletariat as the transitional stage to the abolition of classes, and with them, of the state."¹

Addicts to hair-splitting criticism, and bourgeois "exterminators of Marxism," will perhaps see a contradiction between this recognition of the "abolition of the state" and the repudiation of this formula as an anarchist one in the previously-quoted passage from *Anti-Dühring*. It would not be surprising if the opportunists stamped Engels, too, as an "anarchist," for the habit of accusing the internationalists of anarchism is becoming more and more widespread among the social-chauvinists.

Marxism always taught that the state will be abolished with the abolition of classes. The well-known passage on the "withering away of the state" in *Anti-Dühring* does not blame the anarchists simply for being in favour of the abolition of the state, but for preaching that the state can be abolished "overnight."

In view of the fact that the now prevailing "Social-democratic" doctrine completely distorts the relation of Marxism to anarchism on the question of the abolition of the state, it will be very useful to recall a certain controversy conducted by Marx and Engels with the anarchists.

2 CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

This controversy took place in 1873. Marx and Engels contributed articles against the Proudhonists, "autonomists" or "anti-authoritarians," to an Italian Socialist annual, and it was not until 1913 that these articles appeared in German in *Neue Zeit*. Ridiculing the anarchists and their repudiation of politics, Marx wrote:

"If the political struggle of the working class assumes violent forms if the workers set up their revolutionary dictatorship in place of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, they commit the terrible crime of

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng. ed

violating principles, for in order to satisfy their wretched, vulgar, everyday needs, in order to crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie, instead of laying down their arms and abolishing the state, they give the state a revolutionary and transitory form "1

It was exclusively against this kind of "abolition" of the state that Marx fought in refuting the anarchists! He did not combat the theory that the state would disappear when classes disappeared, or that it would be abolished when classes are abolished, he opposed the proposition that the workers should renounce the use of arms, the use of organised force, that is, *the use of the state*, in order to "crush the resistance of the bourgeoisie"

To prevent the true meaning of his struggle against the anarchists from being distorted, Marx deliberately emphasised the "revolutionary and transitory form" of the state which the proletariat needs. The proletariat needs the state only temporarily. We do not at all disagree with the anarchists on the question of the abolition of the state as an aim. We maintain that, to achieve this aim, we must temporarily make use of the instruments, resources and methods of the state power *against* the exploiters, just as the dictatorship of the oppressed class is temporarily necessary for the abolition of classes. Marx chooses the sharpest and clearest way of stating his position against the anarchists: after overthrowing the yoke of the capitalists, should the workers "lay down their arms," or use them against the capitalists in order to crush their resistance? But what is the systematic use of arms by one class against the other, if not a "transitory form" of state?

Let every Social-democrat ask himself: is *that* the way he has been putting the question of the state in controversy with the anarchists? Is *that* the way the vast majority of the official Socialist Parties of the Second International have been putting it? Engels enlarges on the same ideas in even greater detail and more simply. First of all he ridicules the muddled ideas of the Proudhonists, who called themselves "anti-authoritarians," i.e., they repudiated every sort of authority, every sort of subordination, every sort of power. Take a factory, a railway, a ship on the high seas, said Engels—is it not clear that not one of these complex technical units, based on the employment of machinery and the ordered co-operation of many people, could function without a certain amount of subordination and, consequently, without some authority or power?

"When I put these arguments," writes Engels, "up against the most rabid anti-authoritarians, they were able to give me only the following answer: 'Ah! that is true, but here it is not a case of authority which

¹ *Neue Zeit*, Vol XXXII, 1, 1913-14, p 40

we confer on delegates, *but of a commission!*" These gentlemen think that they have changed the thing by changing its name . "

Having thus shown that authority and autonomy are relative terms, that the sphere of their application varies with the various phases of social development, that it is absurd to take them as absolutes, and adding that the sphere of the application of machinery and large-scale production is constantly becoming enlarged Engels passes from the general discussion of authority to the question of the state and writes

" If the autonomists would confine themselves to saying that the social organisation of the future will restrict authority to the limits in which the relations of production make it inevitable, we could understand each other, but they are blind to all facts which make the thing necessary, and they hurl themselves against the world

" Why don't the anti-authoritarians confine themselves to crying out against political authority, against the state? All socialists are agreed that the state, and with it political authority, will disappear as the result of the coming social revolution, *i.e.* that public functions will lose their political character and be transformed into the simple administrative functions of watching over real social interests. But the anti-authoritarians demand that the political state should be abolished at once, even before the social conditions which brought it into being have been abolished. They demand that the first act of the social revolution shall be the abolition of authority

Have these gentlemen never seen a revolution? A revolution is undoubtedly the most authoritarian thing there is. It is the act whereby one part of the population imposes its will upon the other part by means of rifles, bayonets and cannon, which are authoritarian means if ever there were any. And the victorious party, if it does not wish to have fought in vain, must maintain its rule by means of the terror which its arms inspire in the reactionaries. Would the Paris Commune have lasted a single day if it had not made use of this authority of the armed population against the bourgeoisie? Should we not on the contrary reproach it for not having made more extensive use of this authority? Therefore either one of two things is possible, either the anti-authoritarians don't know what they are saying, and in this case they sow nothing but confusion, or they do know, and in this case they are betraying the cause of the proletariat. In either case they serve the reaction."

This argument touches upon questions which must be examined in connection with the relation between politics and economics during the "withering away" of the state. (This is dealt with in the next chapter.) These questions are the transformation of public functions from political functions into simple functions of administration, and the "political state." This last term, particularly liable to cause misunderstanding, indicates the process of the withering away of the state. At a certain stage of its withering away the moribund state can be called a non-political state.

Again, the most remarkable thing in this passage from Engels is the way he states the case against the anarchists. Social-

democrats, the would-be disciples of Engels, have discussed this question with the anarchists millions of times since 1873, but they have *not* discussed it as Marxists can and should. The anarchist idea of the abolition of the state is muddled and *non-revolutionary*—that is how Engels put it. It is precisely the revolution, in its rise and development, with its specific tasks in relation to violence, authority, power, the state, that the anarchists do not wish to see.

The usual criticism of anarchism by present-day Social-democrats has been reduced to the purest Philistine banality. "We recognise the state, whereas the anarchists do not!" Naturally, such banality cannot but repel revolutionary workers who think at all! Engels says something different. He emphasises the fact that all socialists recognise the disappearance of the state as a result of the socialist revolution. He then deals with the concrete question of the revolution—the very question which, as a rule, the Social-democrats, because of their opportunism, evade, and leave, so to speak, exclusively for the anarchists "to work out." And in putting the question, Engels takes the bull by the horns, he asks: should not the Commune have made *more* use of the *revolutionary* power of the state, *i.e.*, of the armed proletariat organised as the ruling class?

Prevailing official Social-democracy usually dismissed the question of the concrete tasks of the proletariat in the revolution either with a Philistine sneer, or, at best, with the evasive sophism, "wait and see." And the anarchists were thus justified in saying about such Social-democracy that it had betrayed its task of educating the working class for the revolution. Engels utilises the experience of the last proletarian revolution precisely for the purpose of making a very concrete study of what the proletariat should do in relation to the banks and the state, and how it should do it.

3 LETTER TO BEBEL

One of the most remarkable, if not the most remarkable observation on the state in the works of Marx and Engels is contained in the following passage in Engels' letter to Bebel dated March 18-28, 1875. This letter, we may observe in passing, was as far as we know, first published by Bebel in Volume II of his memoirs (*Aus meinem Leben*), which appeared in 1911, *i.e.*, thirty-six years after it had been written and posted.

Engels wrote to Bebel criticising the very draft of the Gotha Programme which Marx also criticised in his famous letter to Bracke. Referring particularly to the question of the state, Engels said

" The free people's state is transformed into the free state. Taken in its grammatical sense a free state is one where the state is free in relation to its citizens and is therefore a state with a despotic government. The whole talk about the state should be dropped, especially since the Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word. The 'people's state' has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists too long although Marx's book against Proudhon and later *The Communist Manifesto* directly declare that with the introduction of the socialist order of society the state will dissolve of itself [*sich auflöst*] and disappear. As therefore the 'state' is only a transitional institution which is used in the struggle, in the revolution, in order to hold down [*niederzuhalten*] one's adversaries by force, it is pure nonsense to talk of a 'free people's state', so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state, it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom, the state as such, ceases to exist. We would, therefore, propose to replace the word 'state' everywhere by the word *Gemeinwesen* [community] a good old German word which can very well represent the French word *commune*.¹

It must be borne in mind that this letter refers to the Party programme which Marx criticised in a letter dated only a few weeks later than the above (Marx's letter is dated May 5, 1875), and that at the time Engels was living with Marx in London. Consequently when he says "we" in the last sentence, Engels undoubtedly in his own as well as in Marx's name suggests to the leader of the German workers party that the word "state" *be struck out of the programme* and replaced by the word "community".

What a howl about "anarchism" would be raised by the leaders of present-day "Marxism" which has been faked for the convenience of the opportunists, if such a rectification of the programme were suggested to them!

Let them howl. The bourgeoisie will praise them for it.

But we shall go on with our work. In revising the programme of our Party we must unfailingly take the advice of Engels and Marx into consideration in order to come nearer the truth, to restore Marxism by purging it of distortions, to guide the struggle of the working class for its emancipation more correctly. Certainly no Bolshevik will be found who opposes the advice of Engels and Marx. The only difficulty that may, perhaps, arise will be in regard to terminology. In German there are two words meaning "community,"² of which Engels used the one which does *not* denote a single community, but the totality, the system of communities. In Russian there is no such word, and perhaps we may have to decide to use the French word "commune," although this also has its drawbacks.

¹ *The Correspondence of Marx and Engels*—Ed. Eng. ed.

² *Gemeinde and Gemeinwesen*—Ed. Eng. ed.

"The Commune, which was no longer a state in the proper sense of the word"—this is Engels' most important theoretical statement. After what has been said above, this statement is perfectly clear. The Commune *ceased* to be a state in so far as it had to repress, not the majority of the population, but the minority (the exploiters). It had smashed the bourgeois state machine, in place of a *special* repressive force, the whole population itself came on the scene. All this is a departure from the state in the proper sense of the word. And had the Commune lasted, all traces of the state in it would have "withered away" of themselves, it would not have been necessary for it to "abolish" the institutions of the state, they would have ceased to function in proportion as they ceased to have anything to do.

"The people's state has been thrown in our faces by the anarchists." In saying this, Engels had Bakunin and his attacks on the German Social Democrats particularly in mind. Engels admitted that these attacks were justified *in so far* as the 'people's state' was as much an absurdity and as much a departure from socialism as the "free people's state." Engels tried to put the struggle of the German Social Democrats against the anarchists on right lines, to make this struggle correct in principle, to purge it of opportunist prejudices concerning the "state." Alas! Engels' letter was pigeonholed for thirty-six years. We shall see below that, even after Engels' letter was published, Kautsky obstinately repeated what in essence were the very mistakes against which Engels had uttered his warning.

Bebel replied to Engels in a letter, dated September 21, 1875, in which he wrote, *inter alia*, that he 'fully agrees' with Engels' criticism of the draft programme, and that he had reproached Liebknecht for his readiness to make concessions (p. 304 of the German edition of Bebel's *Memoirs*, Vol. II). But if we take Bebel's pamphlet, *Unsere Ziele*,¹ we find there arguments on the state that are absolutely wrong.

"The state must be transformed from one based on *class rule* into a *people's state*."

This is printed in the *ninth* (the ninth!) edition of Bebel's pamphlet! It is not surprising that such persistently repeated opportunist views on the state were absorbed by German Social Democracy, especially as Engels' revolutionary interpretations were safely forgotten, and all the conditions of everyday life were such as to *prevent* the people from revolution for a long time!

¹ *Unsere Ziele (Our Goal)*, German edition, 1886.

4 CRITICISM OF THE DRAFT OF THE ERFURT PROGRAMME

In examining the Marxian doctrine of the state, the criticism of the draft of the Erfurt Programme sent by Engels to Kautsky on June 29, 1891, a criticism published only ten years later, in *Neue Zeit* cannot be ignored, for this criticism is mainly concerned with the *opportunist* views of Social Democracy on questions of *state structure*

We shall note in passing that Engels also makes an exceedingly valuable observation on questions of economics, which shows how attentively and thoughtfully he watched the changes in modern capitalism, and how he was able to foresee to a certain extent the tasks of our own, the imperialist, epoch. Here is the passage referring to the word "planlessness" (*Planlosigkeit*) used in the draft programme, as characteristic of capitalism, Engels writes

"When we pass from joint-stock companies to trusts which control and monopolise whole branches of industry, it is not only private production that ceases, but also planlessness"¹

Here we have what is most essential in the theoretical appraisal of the latest phase of capitalism, *i.e.*, imperialism, *viz.*, that capitalism becomes monopoly capitalism. The latter must be emphasised because the erroneous bourgeois reformist view that monopoly capitalism or state monopoly capitalism is *no longer* capitalism, but can already be termed "state socialism," or something of that sort, is very widespread. The trusts, of course, have not created, do not create now, and cannot create full and complete planning. But to whatever extent they do plan, to whatever extent the capitalist magnates calculate in advance the volume of production on a national and even on an international scale, and to whatever extent they systematically regulate it, we still remain *under capitalism*—capitalism in its new stage, it is true, but still, undoubtedly capitalism. The "proximity" of *such* capitalism to socialism should serve the genuine representatives of the proletariat as proof of the proximity, ease, feasibility and urgency of the socialist revolution, and not as an argument in favour of tolerating the repudiation of such a revolution or in favour of making capitalism look more attractive, an occupation in which all the reformists are engaged.

But let us return to the question of the state. In this letter Engels makes three valuable suggestions: first, as regards the republic, second as regards the connection between the national question and the form of state, and, third, as regards local self-government.

¹ *Neue Zeit*, Vol. XX, 1 [1901-02], 8

no need to do so—is to remove the fig-leaf from absolutism, and use it to screen one's own nakedness.¹

The great majority of the official leaders of the German Social Democratic Party, who pigeonholed this advice, have indeed proved to be a screen for absolutism.

‘Ultimately such a policy can only lead one's own party astray. General abstract political questions have been put into the foreground, concerning thus the immediate concrete questions—the questions which at the first great events, the first political crisis put themselves on the agenda. What can result from this except that at the decisive moment the Party is suddenly left without guidance—that unclarity and disunity reign on the most decisive points because these points have never been discussed?’

This forgetfulness of the great main standpoint in the momentary interests of the day—this struggling and striving for the success of the moment without consideration for the latter consequences, this sacrifice of the future of the movement for its present may be ‘honestly’ meant, but it is and remains opportunism, and ‘honest’ opportunism is perhaps the most dangerous of all.

If one thing is certain it is that our Party and the working class can only come to power under the form of the democratic republic. This is even the specific form for the dictatorship of the proletariat as the Great French Revolution has already shown.¹

Engels repeats here in a particularly striking manner the fundamental idea which runs like a red thread through all of Marx's works—namely, that the democratic republic is the nearest approach to the dictatorship of the proletariat. For such a republic—without in the least abolishing the domination of capital and, therefore, the oppression of the masses and the class struggle—inevitably leads to such an extension, development, unfolding and intensification of that struggle that, as soon as the possibility arises of satisfying the fundamental interests of the oppressed masses, this possibility is achieved inevitably and solely in the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the leadership of those masses by the proletariat. These, too, are ‘forgotten words’ of Marxism for the whole of the Second International, and this forgetfulness was demonstrated with particular vividness by the history of the Menshevik Party in the first half year of the Russian Revolution of 1917.

On the question of a federal republic in connection with the national composition of the population, Engels wrote

‘What should take its place?’ (of present-day Germany with its reactionary monarchical constitution and its equally reactionary division into petty states, which perpetuates all the specific features of “Prussianism” instead of dissolving them in Germany as a whole) “In my view, the proletariat can use only the form of a one and indivisible republic. In the gigantic territory of the United States a federal republic is still, on the

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

whole, a necessity, although in the Eastern states it is already becoming a hindrance. It would be a step forward in England, where the two islands are peopled by four nations and in spite of a single Parliament three different systems of legislation exist side by side even to day. In little Switzerland, it has long been a hindrance, tolerable only because Switzerland is content to be a purely passive member of the European state system. For Germany, federation of the Swiss type would be an enormous step backward. Two points distinguish a federal state from a unitary state: first, that each separate federated state, each canton, has its own civil and criminal legislative and judicial system, and, second, that alongside of a popular chamber there is also a federal chamber in which each canton, large or small, votes as such.¹

In Germany the federal state is the transitional stage to the complete unitary state and the "revolution above" of 1866 and 1870 must not be reversed but supplemented by a "movement from below."

Engels did not display indifference to the question of the forms of state, on the contrary, he tried to analyse the transitional forms with the utmost care in order to establish, in accordance with the concrete, historical, specific features of each separate case, *from what and into what* the given transitional form is evolving.

From the point of view of the proletariat and the proletarian revolution, Engels, like Marx, insisted on democratic centralism, on one indivisible republic. He regarded the federal republic either as an exception and a hindrance to development, or as a transitional form from a monarchy to a centralised republic, as a "step forward" under certain special conditions. And in these special conditions, the national question comes to the front.

In spite of their ruthless criticism of the reactionary nature of small states and, in certain concrete cases, the screening of this by the national question, Engels and Marx never betrayed a trace of a desire to evade the national question—a desire of which the Dutch and Polish Marxists are often guilty, as a result of their very justifiable opposition to the narrow Philistine nationalism of "their" little states.

Even in regard to England, where geographical conditions, a common language and the history of many centuries would seem to have "put an end" to the national question in the separate small divisions of England—even in regard to this country, Engels took into account the patent fact that the national question had not yet been settled, and recognised in consequence that the establishment of a federal republic would be a "step forward." Of course, there is not a trace here of an attempt to abandon the

¹ *Ibid* —Ed

criticism of the defects of a federal republic or the most determined propaganda and struggle for a united and centralised democratic republic

But Engels did not interpret democratic centralism in the bureaucratic sense in which this term is used by bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideologists, including the anarchists. His interpretation did not in the least preclude such wide local self-government as would combine the voluntary defence of the unity of the state by the "communes" and districts with the complete abolition of all bureaucracy and all "ordering" from above. Enlarging on the programme views of Marxism on the state, Engels wrote

"So, then, a unitary republic—but not in the sense of the present French Republic, which is nothing but the Empire established in 1798 minus the Emperor. From 1792 to 1798 each Department of France, each commune [*Gemeinde*], enjoyed complete self-government on the American model, and this is what we too must have. How self-government is to be organised and how we can manage without a bureaucracy has been shown by America and the First French Republic, and is being shown even to-day by Australia, Canada and the other English colonies. And a provincial and local self-government of this type is far freer than Swiss federalism under which, it is true, the canton is very independent in relation to the *Bund* (i.e. the federated state as a whole), but is also independent in relation to the district and the commune. The cantonal governments appoint the district governors [*Bezirksstatthalter*] and prefects—a feature which is unknown in English speaking countries and which we shall have to abolish here in the future along with the Prussian *Landrate* and *Regierungsrate*" (commissaries, district police chiefs, governors, and in general all officials appointed from above)¹

Accordingly, Engels proposes the following wording for the clause in the programme on self-government

"Complete self-government for the provinces" (districts and communities) through officials elected by universal suffrage. The abolition of all local and provincial authorities appointed by the state"

I have already had occasion to point out—in *Pravda* (No. 68, June 10, 1917), which was suppressed by the government of Kerensky and other "Socialist" Ministers—how in this connection (of course not only in this connection by any means) our alleged Socialist representatives of alleged-revolutionary alleged-democracy have departed from democracy in the most scandalous manner. Naturally, people who have bound themselves by a "coalition" with the imperialist bourgeoisie have remained deaf to this criticism.

It is extremely important to note that Engels, armed with

¹ *Ibid* —Ed

facts, disproves by a precise example the prejudice that is very widespread, particularly among petty-bourgeois democrats, that a federal republic necessarily means a greater amount of freedom than a centralised republic. This is not true. It is disproved by the facts cited by Engels regarding the centralised French Republic of 1792-98 and the federal Swiss Republic. The really democratic centralised republic gave *more* freedom than the federal republic. In other words, the *greatest* amount of local, provincial and other freedom known in history was granted by a *centralised* and not by a federal republic.

Insufficient attention has been and is being paid to this fact in our Party propaganda and agitation, as, indeed, to the whole question of federal and centralised republics and local self-government.

5 THE 1891 INTRODUCTION TO MARX'S "CIVIL WAR IN FRANCE"

In his introduction to the third edition of *The Civil War in France* (this Introduction is dated March 18, 1891, and was originally published in *Neue Zeit*) Engels, in addition to many other interesting incidental remarks on questions connected with the attitude to be taken towards the state, gives a remarkably striking résumé of the lessons of the Commune. This résumé, which was rendered more profound by the entire experience of the twenty years that separated the author from the Commune, and which was directed particularly against the "superstitious belief in the state" so widespread in Germany, can justly be called the *last word* of Marxism on the question dealt with here.

In France, Engels observes, the workers were armed after every revolution,

"therefore the disarming of the workers was the first commandment for the bourgeois at the helm of the state. Hence after every revolution won by the workers, a new struggle, ending with the defeat of the workers."¹

This résumé of the experience of bourgeois revolutions is as concise as it is expressive. The essence of the matter—also, by the way, of the question of the state (*has the oppressed class arms?*)—is here remarkably well defined. It is precisely this essential thing which is most often ignored by professors, who are influenced by bourgeois ideology, as well as by petty-bourgeois democrats. In the Russian Revolution of 1917, the honour (Cavaignac honour) of blabbing this secret of bourgeois revolutions fell to the Menshevik, "also-Marxist," Tseretelli. In his

¹ Introduction to *The Civil War in France*—Ed. Eng. ed.

"historic" speech of June 22, Tseretelli blurted out the decision of the bourgeoisie to disarm the Petrograd workers—referring, of course to this decision as his own, and as a vital necessity for the "state"!

Tseretelli's historic speech of June 22 will, of course, serve every historian of the Revolution of 1917 as one of the most striking illustrations of how the Socialist-Revolutionary and Menshevik *bloc*, led by Mr Tseretelli, deserted to the side of the bourgeoisie *against* the revolutionary proletariat

Another incidental remark of Engels, also connected with the question of the state deals with religion. It is well known that German Social Democracy, in proportion as it decayed and became more and more opportunist slipped more and more frequently into the Philistine misinterpretation of the celebrated formula "Religion is a private matter". That is, this formula was twisted to mean that the question of religion was a private matter *even for the party* of the revolutionary proletariat! It was against this utter betrayal of the revolutionary programme of the proletariat that Engels protested. In 1891 he saw only the *very feeble* beginnings of opportunism in his Party, and, therefore, he expressed himself on the subject very cautiously

'As almost without exception workers, or recognised representatives of the workers, sat in the Commune, its decisions bore a decidedly proletarian character. Either they decreed reforms which the republican bourgeoisie had failed to pass solely out of cowardice, but which provided a necessary basis for the free activity of the working class—such as the realisation of the principle that *in relation to the state* religion is a purely private matter—or they promulgated decrees which were in the direct interests of the working class and to some extent cut deeply into the old order of society' ¹

Engels deliberately emphasised the words "in relation to the state," as a straight thrust at the heart of German opportunism, which had declared religion to be a private matter *in relation to the Party*, thus degrading the party of the revolutionary proletariat to the level of the most vulgar "free-thinking" Philistinism, which is prepared to allow a non-denominational status, but which renounces the *Party* struggle against the religious opium which stupifies the people

The future historian of German Social Democracy, in investigating the basic causes of its shameful collapse in 1914, will find no lack of interesting material on this question, from the evasive declarations in the articles of the ideological leader of the Party, Kautsky, which opened wide the door to opportunism, to the

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng cd

attitude of the Party towards the *Los-von-der-Kirche Bewegung* (the "leave the church" movement) in 1913

But let us see how, twenty years after the Commune, Engels summed up its lessons for the fighting proletariat

Here are the lessons to which Engels attached prime importance

" It was precisely the oppressing power of the former centralised government army, political police and bureaucracy, which Napoleon had created in 1798 and since then had been taken over by every new government as a welcome instrument and used against its opponents, it was precisely this power which was to fall everywhere, just as it had already fallen in Paris

" From the outset the Commune was compelled to recognise that the working class, once come to power, could not manage with the old state machine that in order not to lose again its only just conquered supremacy this working class must, on the one hand, do away with all the old repressive machinery previously used against it itself, and, on the other, safeguard itself against its own deputies and officials by declaring them all, without exception, subject to recall at any moment. "1

Engels emphasises again and again that the state remains a state, *i.e.* it retains its fundamental and characteristic feature of transforming the officials, the "servants of society," its organs, into the *masters* of society not only under a monarchy, but also in a democratic republic

" Against this transformation of the state and the organs of the state from servants of society into masters of society—an inevitable transformation in all previous states—the Commune made use of two infallible expedients. In the first place it filled all posts—administrative, judicial and educational—by election on the basis of universal suffrage of all concerned, with the right of the same electors to recall their delegate at any time. And, in the second place, all officials, high or low, were paid only the wages received by other workers. The highest salary paid by the Commune to anyone was 6,000 francs². In this way, an effective barrier to place-hunting and careerism was set up, even apart from the binding mandates³ to delegates to representative bodies which were also added in profusion "1

Engels here approaches the interesting boundary line at which consistent democracy is transformed into socialism and at which it demands socialism. For, in order to abolish the state, the functions of the Civil Service must be converted into the simple opera-

¹ *Ibid*—Ed. Eng. ed

² Nominally about 2,400 rubles per annum, according to the present rate of exchange about 6,000 rubles. Those Bolsheviks who propose that a salary of 9,000 rubles be paid to members of municipal councils, for instance, instead of proposing a maximum salary of 6,000 rubles for the whole country—quite an adequate sum—are committing an unpardonable error

³ *I.e.*, binding instructions—Ed. Eng. ed

tions of control and accounting that can be performed by the vast majority of the population and, ultimately, by every single individual. And in order to abolish careerism, it must be made *impossible* for "honourable" though not lucrative posts in the public service to be used as a springboard to highly lucrative posts in banks or joint-stock companies, as *constantly* happens in all the freest capitalist countries.

But Engels did not make the mistake some Marxists make in dealing, for example, with the right of nations to self-determination, *etc.*, argue that this is impossible under capitalism and will be unnecessary under socialism. Such a seemingly clever but really incorrect statement might be made in regard to *any* democratic institution, including moderate salaries for officials, because fully consistent democracy is impossible under capitalism, and under socialism all democracy *withers away*.

It is a sophism that is similar to the old humorous problem, will a man become bald if he loses one more hair?

To develop democracy *to its logical conclusion*, to find the *forms* for this development, to test them by practice, and so forth—all this is one of the constituent tasks of the struggle for the social revolution. Taken separately, no sort of democracy will bring socialism. But in actual life democracy will never be "taken separately", it will be "taken together" with other things, it will exert its influence on economics, will stimulate *its* reformation, and in its turn it will be influenced by economic development, and so on. Such are the dialectics of living history.

Engels continues

"This shattering [*Sprengung*] of the former state power and its replacement by a new and really democratic state is described in detail in the third section of *The Civil War*. But it was necessary to dwell briefly here once more on some of its features, because in Germany particularly the superstitious belief in the state has been carried over from philosophy into the general consciousness of the bourgeoisie and even of many workers. According to the philosophical notion, the state is the 'realisation of the moral idea,' or the Kingdom of God on earth, translated into philosophical terms, the sphere in which eternal truth and justice is or should be realised. And from this follows a superstitious reverence for the state and everything connected with it, which takes root the more readily as people from their childhood are accustomed to imagine that the affairs and interests common to the whole of society could not be looked after otherwise than they have been looked after in the past, that is, through the state and its well-paid officials. And people think they have taken quite an extraordinarily bold step forward when they have rid themselves of belief in hereditary monarchy and swear by the democratic republic. In reality, however, the state is nothing but a machine for the oppression of one class by another, and indeed, in the democratic republic no less than in the monarchy, and at best an evil inherited by the proletariat after its victorious struggle for class suprem-

60]

acy, whose worst sides the proletariat, just like the Commune, cannot avoid having to lop off at the earliest possible moment, until such time as a new generation reared in new and free social conditions will be able to throw the entire lumber of the state on the scrap heap"¹

Engels warned the Germans not to forget the fundamentals of socialism on the question of the state in general in connection with the substitution of a republic for the monarchy. His warnings now read like a lecture to Messrs Tseretelli and Chernov, who in their coalition practice revealed a superstitious belief in and a superstitious reverence for the state!

Two more points. First the fact that Engels said that in a democratic republic, "no less" than in a monarchy, the state remains a "machine for the oppression of one class by another" does not signify that the form of oppression is a matter of indifference to the proletariat, as some anarchists "teach". A wider, freer and more open *form* of the class struggle and of class oppression greatly assists the proletariat in its struggle for the abolition of all classes.

Second, why will only a new generation be able to throw all the useless lumber of the state of the scrap-heap? This question is bound up with the question of overcoming democracy, with which we shall deal now.

6 ENGELS ON OVERCOMING DEMOCRACY

Engels had occasion to speak on this subject in connection with the question of the term "Social Democrat" being *scientifically* wrong.

In a preface to an edition of his articles of the 'seventies on various subjects, mainly on "international" questions (*Internationales aus dem Volksstaat*), dated January 3, 1894, *i.e.*, written a year and a half before his death, Engels wrote that in all his articles he used the word "Communist," not "Social Democrat," because at that time it was the Proudhonists in France and the Lassalleans in Germany who called themselves Social Democrats.

- "For Marx and me it was therefore quite impossible to choose such an elastic term to characterise our special point of view. To-day things are different, and the word ["Social-Democrat"] may perhaps pass muster [*mag passieren*], however unsuitable [*unpassend*] it still is for a party whose economic programme is not merely socialist in general, but directly communist, and whose ultimate political aim is to overcome the whole state and therefore democracy as well. The names of *genuine* [Engels' italics] political parties, however, are never wholly appropriate, the party develops while the name persists."

¹ Ibid.—Ed Eng ed

The dialectician Engels remains true to dialectics to the end of his days. Marx and I he says had a splendid, scientifically exact name for the party, but there was no real party, *i.e.*, no proletarian mass party. Now, at the end of the nineteenth century, there is a real party but its name is scientifically inexact. Never mind it will 'pass muster' if only the party *develops*, if only the scientific inexactness of its name is not hidden from it and does not hinder its development in the right direction!

Perhaps some humourist will begin consoling us Bolsheviks in the manner of Engels: we have a genuine party, it is developing splendidly even such a meaningless and ugly term as "Bolshevik" will 'pass muster' although it expresses nothing but the purely accidental fact that at the Brussels-London Congress of 1903 we were in the majority.¹ Perhaps, now that the persecution of our Party by republican and "revolutionary" petty-bourgeois democracy in July and August has made the name "Bolshevik" such a universally respected one that, in addition, this persecution signals the great historical progress our Party has made in its *actual* development, even I would hesitate to insist on the suggestion I made in April to change the name of our Party. Perhaps I would propose a "compromise" to our comrades, *viz.*, to call ourselves the Communist Party, but to retain the word "Bolsheviks" in brackets.

But the question of the name of the Party is incomparably less important than the question of the attitude of the revolutionary proletariat to the state.

In the arguments usually advanced about the state, the mistake is constantly made against which Engels uttered his warning and which we have in passing indicated above, namely, it is constantly forgotten that the abolition of the state means also the abolition of democracy—that the withering away of the state means the withering away of democracy.

At first sight this assertion seems exceedingly strange and incomprehensible—indeed, someone may even begin to fear that we are expecting the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be respected—for is not democracy the recognition of this principle?

No, democracy is *not* identical with the subordination of the minority to the majority. Democracy is a *state* which recognises the subordination of the minority to the majority, *i.e.*, an organ-

¹ The word for "majority" in Russian is "*bolshinstvo*," hence the word "Bolshevik." The word for "minority" in Russian is "*men'shinstvo*," hence the word "Menshevik"—*Ed Eng ed*

isation for the systematic use of violence by one class against the other, by one section of the population against another

We set ourselves the ultimate aim of abolishing the state, i.e., all organised and systematic violence, all use of violence against man in general. We do not expect the advent of an order of society in which the principle of the subordination of the minority to the majority will not be observed. But in striving for socialism we are convinced that it will develop into communism and, hence, that the need for violence against people in general, the need for the *subjection* of one man to another, and of one section of the population to another, will vanish, since people will become accustomed to observing the elementary conditions of social life without force and without subordination.

In order to emphasise this element of habit, Engels speaks of a new generation, "reared in new and free social conditions," which "will be able to throw the entire lumber of the state"—of every kind of state, including even the democratic-republican state—"on the scrap-heap."

In order to explain this it is necessary to examine the question of the economic basis of the withering away of the state.

CHAPTER V

THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF THE WITHERING AWAY OF THE STATE

MARX explains this question most thoroughly in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (letter to Bracke, May 5, 1875, printed only in 1891, in *Neue Zeit*, Vol IX, 1, and in a special Russian edition). The polemical part of this remarkable work, consisting of a criticism of Lassalleism, has, so to speak, overshadowed its positive part, namely, the analysis of the connection between the development of communism and the withering away of the state.

1 MARX'S PRESENTATION OF THE QUESTION

From a superficial comparison of Marx's letter to Bracke (May 5, 1875) with Engels' letter to Bebel (March 28, 1875), which we examined above, it might appear that Marx was much more "pro state" than Engels, and that the difference of opinion between the two writers on the question of the state was very considerable.

Engels suggested to Bebel that all the chatter about the state be dropped, that the word "state" be eliminated from the programme and the word "community" substituted for it. Engels even declared that the Commune was really no longer a state in

the proper sense of the word, while Marx spoke of the "future state in communist society," *i.e.*, apparently he recognised the need for a state even under communism

But such a view would be fundamentally wrong. A closer examination shows that Marx's and Engels' views on the state and its withering away were completely identical, and that Marx's expression quoted above refers merely to this *withering away* of the state

Clearly, there can be no question of defining the exact moment of the *future* withering away—the more so since it must obviously be a rather lengthy process. The apparent difference between Marx and Engels is due to the different subjects they dealt with, the different aims they were pursuing. Engels set out to show Bebel plainly, sharply and in broad outline the absurdity of the prevailing prejudices concerning the state, shared to no small degree by Lassalle. Marx, on the other hand, only touched upon *this* question in passing, being interested mainly in another subject, *viz.*, the *development* of communist society

The whole theory of Marx is an application of the theory of development—in its most consistent, complete, thought-out and replete form—to modern capitalism. It was natural for Marx to raise the question of applying this theory both to the *forthcoming* collapse of capitalism and to the *future* development of *future* communism

On the basis of what *data* can the question of the future development of future communism be raised?

On the basis of the fact that *it has its origin* in capitalism, that it develops historically from capitalism, that it is the result of the action of a social force to which capitalism *has given birth*. There is no trace of an attempt on Marx's part to conjure up a Utopia, to make idle guesses about what cannot be known. Marx treats the question of communism in the same way as a naturalist would treat the question of the development of, say, a new biological species, if he knew that such and such was its origin, and such and such the direction in which it was changing

Marx, first of all, brushes aside the confusion the Gotha Programme brings into the question of the relation between state and society. He writes

" 'Present-day society' is capitalist society, which exists in all civilised countries, more or less free from mediæval admixture, more or less modified by the special historical development of each country and more or less developed. On the other hand the 'present-day state' changes with a country's frontier. It is different in the Prusso-German Empire from

what it is in Switzerland, it is different in England from what it is in the United States 'The present-day state' is therefore a fiction

"Nevertheless the different states of the different civilised countries, in spite of their varied diversity of form, all have this in common that they are based on modern bourgeois society, only more or less capitalistically developed. They have therefore also certain essential features in common. In this sense it is possible to speak of the 'present-day state,' in contrast to the future, in which its present root, bourgeois society, will have died away

"The question then arises what transformation will the state undergo in communist society? In other words, what social functions will remain in existence there that are analogous to the present functions of the state? This question can only be answered scientifically and one does not get a flea-hop nearer to the problem by a thousand-fold combination of the word people with the word state"¹

Having thus ridiculed all talk about a "people's state," Marx formulates the question and warns us, as it were, that to arrive at a scientific answer one must rely only on firmly established scientific data

The first fact that has been established with complete exactitude by the whole theory of development, by science as a whole—a fact which the Utopians forgot, and which is forgotten by present-day opportunists who are afraid of the socialist revolution—is that, historically, there must undoubtedly be a special stage or epoch of *transition* from capitalism to communism

2 THE TRANSITION FROM CAPITALISM TO COMMUNISM

Marx continues

"Between capitalist and communist society lies the period of the revolutionary transformation of the one into the other. There corresponds to this also a political transition period in which the state can be nothing but the *revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat*"¹

Marx bases this conclusion on an analysis of the role played by the proletariat in modern capitalist society, on the data concerning the development of this society, and on the irreconcilability of the antagonistic interests of the proletariat and the bourgeoisie

Earlier the question was put in this way in order to achieve its emancipation, the proletariat must overthrow the bourgeoisie, conquer political power and establish its own revolutionary dictatorship

Now the question is put somewhat differently the transition from capitalist society—which is developing towards communism—to a communist society is impossible without a "political

¹ Critique of the Gotha Programme—Ed Eng ed

transition period ' and the state in this period can only be the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat

What, then is the relation of this dictatorship to democracy?

We have seen that *The Communist Manifesto* simply places the two ideas side by side "to raise the proletariat to the position of the ruling class ' and "to win the battle of democracy" On the basis of all that has been said above, it is possible to determine more precisely how democracy changes in the transition from capitalism to communism

In the capitalist society under the conditions most favourable to its development we have more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic But this democracy is always restricted by the narrow framework of capitalist exploitation, and consequently always remains, in reality, a democracy for the minority, only for the possessing classes, only for the rich Freedom in capitalist society always remains about the same as it was in the ancient Greek republics freedom for the slave-owners Owing to the conditions of capitalist exploitation the modern wage-slaves are also so crushed by want and poverty that "they cannot be bothered with democracy," "they cannot be bothered with politics" in the ordinary peaceful course of events the majority of the population is debarred from participating in social and political life

The correctness of this statement is perhaps most clearly proved by Germany, precisely because in that country constitutional legality lasted and remained stable for a remarkably long time—for nearly half a century (1871-1914)—and because during this period Social Democracy was able to achieve far more in Germany than in other countries in the way of "utilising legality," and was able to organise a larger proportion of the working class into a political party than anywhere else in the world

What is this largest proportion of politically conscious and active wage-slaves that has so far been observed in capitalist society? One million members of the Social Democratic Party—out of fifteen million wage-workers¹ Three million organised in trade unions—out of fifteen million¹

Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society If we look more closely into the mechanism of capitalist democracy, everywhere, in the "petty"—so-called petty—details of the suffrage residential qualification, exclusion of women, etc), and in the technique of the representative institutions, in the actual obstacles to the

¹ According to the figures for 1917—*Ed*

right of assembly (public buildings are not for "beggars"!), in the purely capitalist organisation of the daily press, etc., etc.—on all sides we see restriction after restriction upon democracy. These restrictions, exceptions, exclusions, obstacles for the poor, seem slight, especially in the eyes of one who has never known want himself and has never been in close contact with the oppressed classes in their mass life (and nine-tenths, if not ninety-nine hundredths, of the bourgeois publicists and politicians are of this category), but in their sum total these restrictions exclude and squeeze out the poor from politics, from taking an active part in democracy.

Marx grasped this *essence* of capitalist democracy splendidly, when in analysing the experience of the Commune, he said that the oppressed were allowed, once every few years, to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class should misrepresent them in parliament¹.

But from this capitalist democracy—inevitably narrow, tacitly repelling the poor, and therefore hypocritical and false to the core—development does not proceed simply smoothly and directly to "greater and greater democracy," as the liberal professors and petty-bourgeois opportunists would have us believe. No, development—towards communism—proceeds through the dictatorship of the proletariat, it cannot do otherwise, for the *resistance* of the capitalist exploiters cannot be broken by anyone else or in any other way.

But the dictatorship of the proletariat, *i.e.*, the organisation of the vanguard of the oppressed as the ruling class for the purpose of crushing the oppressors, cannot result merely in an expansion of democracy. *Simultaneously* with an immense expansion of democracy which *for the first time* becomes democracy for the poor, democracy for the people, and not democracy for the rich, the dictatorship of the proletariat imposes a series of restrictions on the freedom of the oppressors, the exploiters, the capitalists. We must crush them in order to free humanity from wage-slavery, their resistance must be broken by force, it is clear that where there is suppression there is also violence, there is no freedom, no democracy.

Engels expressed this splendidly in his letter to Bebel when he said, as the reader will remember, that

"so long as the proletariat still *uses* the state it does not use it in the interests of freedom but in order to hold down its adversaries, and as soon as it becomes possible to speak of freedom the state as such ceases to exist"¹.

¹ See p. 50—*Ed. Eng. ed.*

Democracy for the vast majority of the people, and suppression by force *i.e.*, exclusion from democracy, of the exploiters and oppressors of the people—this is the change democracy undergoes during the *transition* from capitalism to communism

Only in communist society, when the resistance of the capitalists has been completely broken, when the capitalists have disappeared, when there are no classes (*i.e.*, when there is no difference between the members of society as regards their relation to the social means of production), *only then* does "the state cease to exist," and it "*becomes possible to speak of freedom*" Only then will really complete democracy, democracy without any exceptions, be possible and be realised And only then will democracy itself begin to *wither away* owing to the simple fact that, freed from capitalist slavery—from the untold horrors, savagery, absurdities and infamies of capitalist exploitation, people will gradually *become accustomed* to observing the elementary rules of social life that have been known for centuries and repeated for thousands of years in all copy-book maxims they will become accustomed to observing them without force, without compulsion, without subordination, without the *special apparatus* for compulsion which is called the state

The expression "the state *withers away*" is very well chosen, for it indicates both the gradual and the spontaneous nature of the process Only habit can, and undoubtedly will, have such an effect for we see around us millions of times how readily people become accustomed to observing the necessary rules of social life if there is no exploitation if there is nothing that causes indignation, that calls forth protest and revolt and has to be *suppressed*

Thus, in capitalist society we have a democracy that is curtailed, wretched, false, a democracy only for the rich, for the minority The dictatorship of the proletariat, the period of transition to communism, will, for the first time, create democracy for the people, for the majority, in addition to the necessary suppression of the minority—the exploiters Communism alone is capable of giving really complete democracy, and the more complete it is the more quickly will it become unnecessary and wither away of itself

In other words under capitalism we have a state in the proper sense of the word, that is, a special machine for the suppression of one class by another, and of the majority by the minority at that Naturally, the successful discharge of such a task as the systematic suppression of the exploited majority by the exploiting minority calls for the greatest ferocity and savagery in the work

of suppression, it calls for seas of blood through which mankind has to wade in slavery, serfdom and wage-labour

Furthermore, during the *transition* from capitalism to communism, suppression is *still* necessary, but it is the suppression of the exploiting minority by the exploited majority. A special apparatus, a special machine for suppression, the "state," is *still* necessary, but this is now a transitory state, it is no longer a state in the proper sense, for the suppression of the minority of exploiters by the majority of the wage-slaves of *yesterday* is comparatively so easy, simple and natural a task that it will entail far less bloodshed than the suppression of the risings of slaves, serfs or wage-labourers, and it will cost mankind far less. This is compatible with the diffusion of democracy among such an overwhelming majority of the population that the need for a *special machine* of suppression will begin to disappear. The exploiters are, naturally, unable to suppress the people without a very complex machine for performing this task, but the *people* can suppress the exploiters with a very simple "machine," almost without a "machine," without a special apparatus, by the simple *organisation of the armed masses* (such as the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, we may remark, running ahead a little)

Finally, only communism makes the state absolutely unnecessary, for there is *no one* to be suppressed—"no one" in the sense of a *class*, in the sense of a systematic struggle against a definite section of the population. We are not Utopians, and we do not in the least deny the possibility and inevitability of excesses on the part of *individual persons*, or the need to suppress *such excesses*. But, in the first place, no special machine, no special apparatus of repression is needed for this: this will be done by the armed people itself, as simply and as readily as any crowd of civilised people, even in modern society, parts two people who are fighting, or interferes to prevent a woman from being assaulted. And, secondly, we know that the fundamental social cause of excesses, which consist in violating the rules of social life, is the exploitation of the masses, their want and their poverty. With the removal of this chief cause, excesses will inevitably begin to "*wither away*." We do not know how quickly and in what order, but we know that they will wither away. With their withering away, the state will also *wither away*.

Without dropping into Utopias, Marx defined more fully what can be defined *now* regarding this future, namely the difference between the lower and higher phases (degrees, stages) of communist society

3 THE FIRST PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

In the *'Critique of the Gotha Programme'*, Marx goes into some detail to disprove Lassalle's idea that under socialism the worker will receive the "undiminished" or "whole proceeds of his labour." Marx shows that from the whole of the social labour of society it is necessary to deduct a reserve fund, a fund for the expansion of production, for the replacement of "worn-out" machinery and so on; then also from the means of consumption must be deducted a fund for the expenses of management, for schools, hospitals, homes for the aged, and so on.

Instead of Lassalle's hazy, obscure general phrase—"the whole proceeds of his labour to the worker"—Marx makes a sober estimate of exactly how socialist society will have to manage its affairs. Marx proceeds to make a *concrete* analysis of the conditions of life of a society in which there is no capitalism and says:

What we have to deal with here [in analysing the programme of the Party] is a communist society not as it has *developed* on its own foundations but on the contrary as it *emerges from capitalist society*, which is thus in every respect economically, morally and intellectually still stamped with the birthmarks of the old society from whose womb it emerges."¹

And it is this communist society—a society which has just come into the world out of the womb of capitalism and which in every respect bears the birth marks of the old society—that Marx terms the "first" or lower phase of communist society.

The means of production are no longer the private property of individuals. The means of production belong to the whole of society. Every member of society, performing a certain part of socially-necessary labour, receives a certificate from society to the effect that he has done such and such an amount of work. According to this certificate he receives from the public warehouses, where articles of consumption are stored, a corresponding quantity of products. Deducting that proportion of labour which goes to the public fund, every worker, therefore, receives from society as much as he has given it.

"Equal right" seems to reign supreme.

But when Lassalle, having such a social order in view (generally called socialism, but termed by Marx the first phase of communism, speaks of this as "equitable distribution," and says that this is the "equal right" of "all members of society" to "equal proceeds of labour," he is mistaken and Marx exposes his error.

¹ *Critique of the Gotha Programme*—Ed. Eng. ed.
70]

Equal right," says Marx, we indeed have here, but it is *still* a 'bourgeois right,' which, like every right, *presupposes inequality*. Every right is an application of the *same* measure to *different* people who, in fact, are not the same and are not equal to one another that is why "equal right" is really a violation of equality and an injustice. As a matter of fact, every man having performed as much social labour as another receives an equal share of the social product (less the above-mentioned deductions).

But people are not alike one is strong, another is weak, one is married, another is not one has more children, another has less, and so on. And the conclusion Marx draws is

with an equal output and hence an equal share in the social consumption fund one will in fact receive more than another, one will be richer than another and so on. To avoid all the defects, right, instead of being equal would have to be unequal.¹

Hence the first phase of communism cannot produce justice and equality, differences, and unjust differences, in wealth will still exist, but the *exploitation* of man by man will have become impossible, because it will be impossible to seize the *means of production*, the factories, machines, land, etc., as private property. In smashing Lassalle's petty-bourgeois, confused phrases about 'equality' and "justice" in general, Marx shows the *course of development* of communist society, which, at first, is compelled to abolish *only* the "injustice" of the means of production having been seized by private individuals and which *cannot* at once abolish the other injustice of the distribution of articles of consumption "according to the amount of work performed" (and not according to needs).

The vulgar economists, including the bourgeois professors and also "our" Tugan-Baranovsky, constantly reproach the Socialists with forgetting the inequality of people and with "dreaming" of abolishing this inequality. Such a reproach, as we see, only proves the extreme ignorance of Messieurs the bourgeois ideologists.

Marx not only scrupulously takes into account the inevitable inequality of men, he also takes into account the fact that the mere conversion of the means of production into the common property of the whole of society (generally called "socialism") *does not remove* the defects of distribution and the inequality of 'bourgeois right' which *continue to prevail* as long as the products are divided "according to the amount of work performed." Continuing, Marx says

'But these defects are inevitable in the first phase of communist society as it is when it has just emerged after prolonged birthpangs from capi-

¹ *Ibid* —Ed Eng ed

talist society. Right can never be higher than the economic structure of society and the cultural development thereby determined ¹

And so in the first phase of communist society (generally called socialism) "bourgeois right" is *not* abolished in its entirety but only in part, only in proportion to the economic-transformation so far attained, *i.e.*, only in respect of the means of production. "Bourgeois right" recognises them as the private property of separate individuals. Socialism converts them into *common property*. *To that extent*, and to that extent alone, "bourgeois right" disappears.

However it continues to exist so far as its other part is concerned it remains in the capacity of regulator (determining factor) in the distribution of products and allotment of labour among the members of society. The socialist principle "He who does not work neither shall he eat," is *already* realised, the other socialist principle "An equal amount of labour for an equal quantity of products" is also *already* realised. But this is not yet communism, and it does not abolish "bourgeois right," which gives to unequal individuals, in return for an unequal (actually unequal) amount of work, an equal quantity of products.

This is a "defect" says Marx, but it is unavoidable in the first phase of communism for if we are not to fall into Utopianism we cannot imagine that, having overthrown capitalism, people will at once learn to work for society *without any standard of right*, indeed, the abolition of capitalism *does not immediately* create the economic prerequisites for *such* a change.

And there is as yet no other standard than that of "bourgeois right." To this extent therefore there is still need for a state, which, while safeguarding the public ownership of the means of production would safeguard the equality of labour and equality in the distribution of products.

The state withers away in so far as there are no longer any capitalists any classes, and consequently, no *class* can be *suppressed*.

But the state has not yet completely withered away, since there still remains the protection of "bourgeois right" which sanctifies actual inequality. For the complete withering away of the state, complete communism is necessary.

4 THE HIGHER PHASE OF COMMUNIST SOCIETY

Marx continues

"In a higher phase of communist society after the enslaving subordination of individuals under division of labour and therewith the antithesis between mental and physical labour has vanished, after labour

¹ *Ibid*—Ed Eng ed

has become not merely a means to live but has become itself the primary necessity of life, after the productive forces have also increased with the all round development of the individual, and all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly—only then can the narrow horizon of bourgeois right be fully left behind and society inscribe on its banners: "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs!"¹

Only now can we appreciate to the full the correctness of Engels' remarks in which he mercilessly ridiculed the absurdity of combining the words "freedom" and "state". While the state exists there is no freedom. When freedom exists, there will be no state.

The economic basis for the complete withering away of the state is the high stage of development of communism in which the antithesis between mental and physical labour disappears, that is to say, when one of the principal sources of modern *social* inequality—a source, moreover, which cannot be removed immediately by the mere conversion of the means of production into public property, by the mere expropriation of the capitalists—disappears.

This expropriation will *facilitate* the enormous development of the productive forces. And seeing how capitalism is already *retarding* this development to an incredible degree, seeing how much progress could be achieved even on the basis of the present level of modern technique, we have a right to say with the fullest confidence that the expropriation of the capitalists will inevitably result in an enormous development of the productive forces of human society. But how rapidly this development will proceed, how soon it will reach the point of breaking away from the division of labour, of removing the antithesis between mental and physical labour, of transforming work into the "primary necessity of life"—we do not and *cannot* know.

That is why we have a right to speak only of the inevitable withering away of the state; we must emphasise the protracted nature of this process and its dependence upon the rapidity of development of the *higher phase* of communism, and we leave the question of length of time, or the concrete forms of the withering away, quite open, because *no material is available* to enable us to answer these questions.

The state will be able to wither away completely when society can apply the rule: "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs," *i.e.*, when people have become so accustomed to observing the fundamental rules of social life and when their labour is so productive that they will voluntarily work

¹ *Ibid*—Ed. Eng. ed.

according to their ability "The narrow horizon of bourgeois right which compels one to calculate with the shrewdness of a Shylock whether he has not worked half an hour more than another whether he is not getting less pay than another—this narrow horizon will then be left behind. There will then be no need for society to make an exact calculation of the quantity of products to be distributed to each of its members, each will take freely "according to his needs

From the bourgeois point of view, it is easy to declare such a social order to be "a pure Utopia," and to sneer at the Socialists for promising everyone the right to receive from society, without any control of the labour of the individual citizen, any quantity of truffles, automobiles, pianos, etc. Even now, most bourgeois "savants" make shift with such sneers, thereby displaying at once their ignorance and their selfish defence of capitalism.

Ignorance—for it has never entered the head of any Socialist to "promise" that the higher phase of communism will arrive; and the great Socialists in *foreseeing* its arrival, presupposed both a productivity of labour unlike the present and a person *unlike the present* man-in-the-street who, like the seminary students in Pomyalovsky's story,¹ is capable of damaging the stores of social wealth "just for fun," and of demanding the impossible.

Until the "higher" phase of communism arrives, the Socialists demand the *strictest* control, by society *and by the state*, of the amount of labour and the amount of consumption; but this control must *start* with the expropriation of the capitalists, with the establishment of workers' control over the capitalists, and must be carried out, not by a state of bureaucrats but by a state of *armed workers*.

The selfish defence of capitalism by the bourgeois ideologists (and their hangers-on, like Messrs Tseretelli, Chernov and Co) lies in their *substituting* controversies and discussions about the distant future for the essential imperative questions of *present-day* policy, *viz.*, the expropriation of the capitalists, the conversion of *all* citizens into workers and employees of *one* huge "syndicate"—the whole state—and the complete subordination of the whole of the work of this syndicate to the really democratic state of the *Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies*.

In reality, when a learned professor, and following him some

¹ Pomyalovsky's *Seminary Sketches*, depicting the life of the students in an ecclesiastical seminary, of which drunkenness, rioting and filthy pranks were typical—Ed Eng ed

Philistine, and following the latter Messrs Tseretelli and Chernov, talk of the unreasonable Utopias of the demagogic promises of the Bolsheviks, of the impossibility of 'introducing' socialism, it is the higher stage or phase of communism which they have in mind and which no one has ever promised, or has even thought of 'introducing' because, generally speaking, it cannot be "introduced"

And this brings us to the question of the scientific difference between socialism and communism which Engels touched on in his above-quoted argument about the incorrectness of the name "Social Democrat". The political difference between the first, or lower, and the higher phase of communism will in time, no doubt be tremendous, but it would be ridiculous to take cognisance of this difference now, under capitalism, only some isolated anarchists, perhaps, could invest it with primary importance (if there are still any people among the anarchists who have learned nothing from the "Plekhanovist" conversion of the Kropotkins, the Graveses, the Cornelisens and other 'leading lights' of anarchism into social-chauvinists or 'anarcho-trenchists' as Ge one of the few anarchists who has still preserved a sense of honour and a conscience, has expressed it)

But the scientific difference between socialism and communism is clear. What is generally called socialism was termed by Marx the 'first' or lower phase of communist society. In so far as the means of production become *common* property, the word "communism" is also applicable here providing we do not forget that it is *not* complete communism. The great significance of Marx's explanations lies in that here too, he consistently applies materialist dialectics, the theory of development, and regards communism as something which develops *out* of capitalism. Instead of scholastically invented "concocted" definitions and fruitless disputes about words ('What is socialism? What is communism?'), Marx gives an analysis of what may be called stages in the economic ripeness of communism.

In its first phase or first stage, communism *cannot* as yet be economically ripe and entirely free from all the traditions and all traces of capitalism. Hence the interesting phenomenon that communism in its first phase retains "the narrow horizon of *bourgeois* right". Of course, bourgeois right in regard to distribution of articles of *consumption* inevitably presupposes the existence of the *bourgeois state* for right is nothing without an apparatus capable of *enforcing* the observance of the standards of right.

Consequently for a certain time not only bourgeois right

but even the bourgeois state remains under communism, without the bourgeoisie !

This may sound like a paradox or simply a dialectical puzzle which Marxism is often accused of inventing by people who would not take the slightest trouble to study its extraordinarily profound content

As a matter of fact however, the remnants of the old surviving in the new confront us in life at every step, in nature as well as in society. Marx did not smuggle a scrap of "bourgeois" right into communism of his own accord, he indicated what is economically and politically inevitable in the society which is emerging *from the womb* of capitalism

Democracy is of great importance for the working class in its struggle for freedom against the capitalists. But democracy is by no means a boundary that must not be overstepped, it is only one of the stages in the process of development from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to communism

Democracy means equality. The great significance of the proletariat's struggle for equality and the significance of equality as a slogan will be clear if we correctly interpret it as meaning the abolition of *classes*. But democracy means only *formal* equality. As soon as equality is obtained for all members of society *in relation to* the ownership of the means of production, that is, equality of labour and equality of wages, humanity will inevitably be confronted with the question of going beyond formal equality to real equality *i.e.*, to applying the rule, "from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". By what stages, by what practical measures humanity will proceed to this higher aim—we do not and cannot know. But it is important to realise how infinitely mendacious is the ordinary bourgeois conception of socialism as something lifeless, petrified, fixed once for all, whereas in reality *only* under socialism will a rapid, genuine, really mass movement, embracing first the majority and then the whole of the population, commence in all spheres of social and individual life

Democracy is a form of state, one of its varieties. Consequently, like every state it, on the one hand, represents the organised, systematic application of force against persons, but, on the other hand, it signifies the formal recognition of the equality of all citizens, the equal right of all to determine the structure and administration of the state. This, in turn, is connected with the fact that, at a certain stage in the development of democracy, it first rallies the proletariat as a revolutionary class against capitalism, and gives it the opportunity

When the *majority* of the people themselves begin everywhere to keep up such accounts and maintain such control over the capitalists (now converted into employees) and over the intellectual gentry, who preserve their capitalist habits, this control will really become universal, general, national and there will be no way of getting away from it, there will be "nowhere to go"

The whole of society will have become a single office and a single factory with equality of work and equality of pay

But this 'factory discipline' which the proletariat will extend to the whole of society after the defeat of the capitalists and the overthrow of the exploiters is by no means our ideal, or our ultimate goal. It is but a necessary *step* for the purpose of thoroughly purging society of all the hideousness and foulness of capitalist exploitation, *and for the purpose of advancing further*

From the moment all members of society or even only the overwhelming majority have learned to administer the state *themselves*, have taken this business into their own hands have 'set up' control over the insignificant minority of capitalists, over the gentry, who wish to preserve their capitalist habits, and over the workers who have been completely demoralised by capitalism—from this moment the need for government begins to disappear. The more complete democracy becomes, the nearer the moment approaches when it becomes unnecessary. The more democratic the "state" of the armed workers—which is 'no longer a state in the proper sense of the word'—becomes the more rapidly does the *state* begin to wither away.

For when *all* have learned the art of administration, and will indeed independently administer social production, will independently keep accounts control the idlers the gentlefolk the swindlers and similar 'guardians of capitalist traditions' the escape from this national accounting and control will inevitably become so increasingly difficult such a rare exception, and will probably be accompanied by such swift and severe punishment (for the armed workers are practical men and not sentimental intellectuals, and they will scarcely allow anyone to trifle with them), that very soon the *necessity* of observing the simple fundamental rules of human intercourse will become a *habit*.

The door will then be wide open for the transition from the first phase of communist society to its higher phase, and with it to the complete withering away of the state.

CHAPTER VI

THE VULGARISATION OF MARXISM BY THE OPPORTUNISTS

THE question of the relation of the state to the social revolution, and of the social revolution to the state, like the question of revolution generally, troubled the prominent theoreticians and publicists of the Second International (1889-1914) very little. But the most characteristic thing in the process of the gradual growth of opportunism, which led to the collapse of the Second International in 1914, is the fact that even when these people actually were confronted with this question *they tried to evade it* or else failed to notice it.

In general, it may be said that *evasiveness* on the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state—an evasiveness which was to the advantage of opportunism and fostered it—resulted in the *distortion* of Marxism and in its complete vulgarisation.

To characterise this lamentable process briefly, we shall take the most prominent theoreticians of Marxism—Plekhanov and Kautsky.

1. PLEKHANOV'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE ANARCHISTS

Plekhanov wrote a special pamphlet on the question of the relation of anarchism to socialism, entitled *Anarchism and Socialism*, published in German in 1894.

Plekhanov managed somehow to treat this subject while completely ignoring the most vital, topical, and politically essential point in the struggle against anarchism, *viz.*, the relation of the revolution to the state, and the question of the state in general! His pamphlet is divided into two parts: one historical and literary, containing valuable material on the history of the ideas of Sturmer, Proudhon and others; the other is Philistine, and contains a clumsy dissertation on the theme that an anarchist cannot be distinguished from a bandit.

An amusing combination of subjects and most characteristic of Plekhanov's whole activity on the eve of the revolution and during the revolutionary period in Russia. Indeed, in the years 1905 to 1917, Plekhanov revealed himself as a semi-doctrinaire and semi-Philistine who, in politics, followed in the wake of the bourgeoisie.

We have seen how, in their controversy with the anarchists, Marx and Engels very thoroughly explained their views on the relation of revolution to the state. In 1891, in his foreword to Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Engels wrote that

"we —that is, Engels and Marx—"were at that time, hardly two years after the Hague Congress of the [First] International, engaged in the most violent struggle against Bakunin and his anarchists"

The anarchists had tried to claim the Paris Commune as their "own," so to speak, as a corroboration of their doctrine, and they betrayed utter inability to understand its lessons and Marx's analysis of these lessons. Anarchism has failed to give anything even approaching a true solution of the concrete political problems, *viz.*, must the old state machine be *smashed*? and *what* should supersede it?

But to speak of "anarchism and socialism" and evade the question of the state, *to fail to take note* of the whole development of Marxism before and after the Commune, inevitably means slipping into opportunism. For the very thing opportunism needs is that the two questions just mentioned should *not* be raised at all. This is *already* a victory for opportunism.

2 KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH THE OPPORTUNISTS

Undoubtedly an immeasurably larger number of Kautsky's works have been translated into Russian than into any other language. It is not without reason that German Social Democrats sometimes say in jest that Kautsky is read more in Russia than in Germany (we may say parenthetically, that there is deeper historical significance in this jest than those who first made it suspected, for the Russian workers, by creating in 1905 an extraordinarily strong, an unprecedented demand for the best works of the best Social-Democratic literature in the world, and by receiving translations and editions of these works in quantities unheard of in other countries, transplanted at an accelerated tempo, so to speak, the enormous experience of a neighbouring, more advanced country to the young soil of our proletarian movement)

Besides his popularisation of Marxism, Kautsky is particularly well known in our country because of his controversy with the opportunists, headed by Bernstein. But one fact is almost unknown, one which cannot be overlooked if we are to set ourselves the task of investigating how it was that Kautsky drifted into the unbelievably disgraceful morass of confusion and defence of social-chauvinism during the great crisis of 1914-15. This fact is the following: shortly before he came out against the prominent representatives of opportunism in France (Millerand and Jaurès) and in Germany (Bernstein), Kautsky betrayed very con-

siderable vacillation The Marxian journal, *Zarya*,¹ which was published in Stuttgart in 1901-2, and advocated revolutionary proletarian views, was forced to enter into controversy with Kautsky, to characterise as "elastic" the half-hearted, evasive and conciliatory resolution on the opportunists that he proposed at the International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1900 Kautsky's letters published in Germany revealed no less hesitancy on his part before he took the field against Bernstein

Of immeasurably greater significance, however, is the fact that, in his controversy with the opportunists, in his formulation of the question and his method of treating it, we can observe, now that we are investigating the *history* of his latest betrayal of Marxism, his systematic gravitation towards opportunism precisely on the question of the state

Let us take Kautsky's first important work against opportunism, *Bernstein und das sozialdemokratische Programm* Kautsky refutes Bernstein in detail, but the characteristic thing about it is the following

Bernstein, in his famous (the fame of Herostratus) *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus*, accuses Marxism of "*Blanquism*" (an accusation since repeated thousands of times by the opportunists and liberal bourgeois in Russia against the representatives of revolutionary Marxism, the Bolsheviks) In this connection Bernstein dwells particularly on Marx's *Civil War in France*, and tries, quite unsuccessfully, as we have seen, to identify Marx's views on the lessons of the Commune with those of Proudhon Bernstein pays particular attention to Marx's conclusion, which the latter emphasised in his preface of 1872 to *The Communist Manifesto*, viz, that "the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes"

This utterance "pleased" Bernstein so much that he repeated it no less than three times in his book—interpreting it in the most distorted opportunist sense

As we have seen, Marx wanted to say that the working class must *smash, break, shatter* (*Sprengung*—the expression used by Engels) the whole state machine But according to Bernstein it would appear as though Marx in these words warned the working class *against* excessive revolutionary zeal when seizing power

A cruder and uglier distortion of Marx's idea cannot be imagined

¹ *The Dawn*—Ed Eng ed

How then did Kautsky proceed in his detailed refutation of Bernsteinism ?

He refrained from probing to the depths of the distortion of Marxism by opportunism on this point. He cited the above-quoted passage from Engels' preface to Marx's *Civil War* and said that according to Marx the working class cannot *simply* lay hold of the *ready-made* state machine, but generally speaking, *it can lay hold of it*—and that was all. Not a word does Kautsky utter about the fact that Bernstein attributed to Marx the *very opposite* of Marx's real views about the fact that the task of the proletarian revolution which Marx advanced in 1852 was to "smash" the state machine.

The result was that the most essential difference between Marxism and opportunism on the tasks of the proletarian revolution was glossed over !

Writing "*in opposition*" to Bernstein, Kautsky said

We can safely leave the solution of the problem of the proletarian dictatorship to the future (German edition, p. 172)

This is not an argument *against* Bernstein, but, in essence a *concession* to him, a surrender to opportunism, for at present the opportunists ask nothing better than that we should "safely leave to the future" all fundamental questions of the tasks of the proletarian revolution.

From 1852 to 1891, for forty years, Marx and Engels taught the proletariat that it must smash the state machine. In 1899, Kautsky confronted on this point with the complete betrayal of Marxism by the opportunists, fraudulently *substituted* for the question of whether it was necessary to smash this machine the question of the concrete forms in which it was to be smashed, and then tried to escape behind the screen of the "indisputable" (and barren) Philistine truth that concrete forms cannot be known in advance ! !

A gulf separates Marx and Kautsky in their respective attitudes towards the task of the proletarian party in preparing the working class for revolution.

We shall take the next, more mature work by Kautsky, which also, to a large extent, was written to refute opportunist errors. This is his pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*. In this pamphlet the author chose as his special theme the question of "the proletarian revolution" and the "proletarian regime". In it he gave much that was exceedingly valuable, but he *evaded* the question of the state. Throughout the pamphlet the author speaks of the

82]

conquest of political power—and nothing else that is, he chooses a formula which makes a concession to the opportunists, for it admits the possibility of power being seized *without* destroying the state machine. The very thing which Marx, in 1872, declared to be “obsolete” in the programme of *The Communist Manifesto* is revived by Kautsky in 1902!

In the pamphlet a special section is devoted to “the forms and weapons of the social revolution.” Here Kautsky speaks of the political mass strike, of civil war, and of “instruments of force at the disposal of the modern large state, such as the bureaucracy and the army”, but not a word does he say about what the Commune had already taught the workers. Evidently, Engels’ warning, particularly to the German Socialists, against ‘superstitious reverence’ for the state was not an idle one.

Kautsky explains the matter by stating that the victorious proletariat ‘will carry out the democratic programme,’ and then he formulates the clauses of this programme. But not a word does Kautsky utter about the new things the year 1871 taught us concerning bourgeois democracy being superseded by proletarian democracy. Kautsky disposes of the question by ‘ponderous sounding banalities such as

“Still, it goes without saying that we shall not achieve power under present conditions. Revolution itself presupposes long and deep-going struggles, which will change our present political and social structure

Undoubtedly this ‘goes without saying’ as much as the statement that horses eat oats, or that the Volga flows into the Caspian Sea. It is a pity that an empty and bombastic phrase about “deep-going” struggles is used as a means of *evading* the question that is urgent for the revolutionary proletariat, namely, *what* expresses the “deep-going” nature of *its* revolution in relation to the state, in relation to democracy, as distinct from previous, non-proletarian revolutions.

By evading this question Kautsky *really* makes a concession to opportunism on this very essential point, although *in words* he declares terrible war against it and emphasises the importance of the “idea of revolution” (how much is this “idea” worth if one is afraid to teach the workers the concrete lessons of revolution?) or says “revolutionary idealism before everything,” or declares that the English workers are now ‘little more than petty bourgeois’.

Kautsky writes

“The most varied forms of enterprise—bureaucratic [?], trade-union, co-operative, private—can exist side by side in socialist society

" There are enterprises which cannot do without a bureaucratic [??] organisation, for example the railways. Here the democratic organisation might take the following form: the workers will elect delegates who will form a sort of parliament, which draws up the working regulations and superintends the management of the bureaucratic apparatus. The management of other enterprises may be transferred to the trade unions, and still others may become co-operative enterprises "

This reasoning is erroneous, and is a step backward compared with what Marx and Engels explained in the 'seventies, using the lessons of the Commune as an example

As far as the alleged need for a "bureaucratic" organisation is concerned, there is no difference whatever between railways and any other enterprise in large-scale machine industry, any factory, any large store, or large-scale capitalist agricultural enterprise. The technique of all such enterprises requires the very strictest discipline, the greatest accuracy on the part of everyone in carrying out his allotted task, for otherwise the whole enterprise would fail to work, or machinery or goods would be damaged. In all such enterprises the workers will, of course, "elect delegates who will form a sort of parliament"

But the whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* be a parliament like the bourgeois-parliamentary institutions. The whole point is that this "sort of parliament" will *not* merely "draw up the working regulations" and "superintend the management of the bureaucratic apparatus," as Kautsky, whose ideas do not go beyond the framework of bourgeois parliamentarism, imagines. In socialist society the "sort of parliament" consisting of workers' deputies will, of course, draw up the working regulations and superintend the management of the "apparatus" — *but* this apparatus will *not* be "bureaucratic." The workers, having conquered political power, will smash the old bureaucratic apparatus, they will shatter it to its very foundations, they will not leave a single stone of it standing, and they will put in its place a new one consisting of workers and office employees, *against* whose transformation into bureaucrats measures will at once be taken as Marx and Engels pointed out in detail: (1) not only election, but also recall at any time; (2) payment no higher than that of ordinary workers; (3) immediate introduction of control and superintendence by *all*, so that *all* shall become "bureaucrats" for a time and so that, therefore, *no one* can become a "bureaucrat."

Kautsky has not reflected at all on Marx's words

"The Commune was to be a working, not a parliamentary body, executive and legislative at the same time."

Kautsky has not in the least understood the difference between bourgeois parliamentarism, which combines democracy (*not for the people*) with bureaucracy (*against the people*), and proletarian democracy, which will take immediate steps to cut bureaucracy down to the roots, and which will be able to carry out these measures to the end, to the complete abolition of bureaucracy, to the introduction of complete democracy for the people

Kautsky here betrays the old "superstitious reverence" for the state, and "superstitious belief" in bureaucracy

We shall now pass on to the last and best of Kautsky's works against the opportunists, his pamphlet, *Der Weg zur Macht*¹ (which, I believe, has not been translated into Russian, for it was published at a time when the severest reaction reigned here, in 1909) This pamphlet marks a considerable step forward, inasmuch as it does not deal with the revolutionary programme in general as in the pamphlet of 1899 against Bernstein, nor with the tasks of the social revolution irrespective of the time of its occurrence, as in the pamphlet, *The Social Revolution*, 1902, it deals with the concrete conditions which compel us to recognise that the "revolutionary era" *is approaching*

The author definitely calls attention to the intensification of class antagonisms in general and to imperialism, which plays a particularly important part in this connection After the "revolutionary period of 1789-1871" in Western Europe, he says, a similar period began in the East in 1905 A world war is approaching with menacing rapidity "It [the proletariat] can no longer talk of premature revolution" "We have entered a revolutionary period" The "revolutionary era is beginning"

The declarations are perfectly clear Kautsky's pamphlet must serve as a measure of comparison between what German Social Democracy *promised to be* before the imperialist war and the depth of degradation to which it fell—Kautsky included—when the war broke out

In the pamphlet we are examining Kautsky wrote

'The present situation brings the danger that we' (*i.e.* German Social Democracy) "may easily appear to be 'more moderate' than we are"

Actually, it turned out that the German Social Democratic Party was much more moderate and opportunist than it appeared to be!

The more characteristic is it, therefore, that although he defi-

¹ *The Road to Power*—Ed Eng ed

ntely declared that the revolutionary era had already begun, Kautsky, in the pamphlet which he himself said was devoted precisely to an analysis of the "political revolution," again completely evaded the question of the state

The sum total of all these evasions of the question omissions and equivocations inevitably led to complete surrender to opportunism, of which we shall soon have to speak

German Social Democracy, in the person of Kautsky, seems to have declared I keep to revolutionary views (1899) I recognise, in particular, the inevitability of the social revolution of the proletariat (1902) I recognise the approach of a new revolutionary area (1909), still, now that the question of the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state is raised, I go backward compared with what Marx said as long ago as 1852 (1912)

It was precisely in this direct form that the question was put in Kautsky's controversy with Pannekoek

3 KAUTSKY'S CONTROVERSY WITH PANNEKOEK

In opposing Kautsky, Pannekoek came out as one of the representatives of the 'Left-radical' movement which counted in its ranks Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Radek and others. Advocating revolutionary tactics they were united in the conviction that Kautsky was going over to the position of the "Centre," which wavered without principles between Marxism and opportunism. The correctness of this view was fully confirmed by the war, when this "Centre" trend, or Kautskvism, wrongly called Marxian revealed itself in all its repulsive wretchedness

In an article touching on the question of the state entitled 'Mass Action and Revolution' (*Neue Zeit* 1912, Vol XXX 2) Pannekoek characterised Kautsky's position as an attitude of 'passive radicalism,' as "a theory of inactive waiting" "Kautsky loses sight of the process of revolution," said Pannekoek (p 616)

In presenting the problem in this way, Pannekoek approached the subject which interests us, namely, the tasks of the proletarian revolution in relation to the state. He wrote

The struggle of the proletariat is not merely a struggle against the bourgeoisie with state power as the objective, but a struggle *against* the state power. The content of this revolution is the destruction and dissolution [*Auflösung*] of the instruments of power of the state with the aid of the instruments of power of the proletariat' (p 544) "The struggle will cease only when the organisation of the state is utterly destroyed. The organisation of the majority will then have demonstrated its superiority by having destroyed the organisation of the ruling minority" (p 548)

The formulation in which Pannekoek presented his ideas suffers from serious defects, but its meaning is sufficiently clear and it is interesting to note *how* Kautsky combated it. He wrote

"Up to now the difference between the Social-Democrats and the anarchists has been that the former wished to conquer state power while the latter wished to destroy it. Pannekoek wants to do both" (p. 724)

Although Pannekoek's exposition lacks precision and concreteness—not to speak of other defects in his article which have no bearing on the present subject—Kautsky seized on the *principle* of the issue indicated by Pannekoek, and on *this fundamental* question of *principle* Kautsky abandoned the Marxian position entirely, completely surrendered to opportunism. His definition of the difference between the Social Democrats and the anarchists is absolutely wrong, and he utterly vulgarised and distorted Marxism.

The difference between the Marxists and the anarchists is thus: (1) the former, while aiming at the complete abolition of the state, recognise that this aim can only be achieved after classes have been abolished by the socialist revolution, as the result of the establishment of socialism which leads to the withering away of the state. The latter want to abolish the state completely overnight, failing to understand the conditions under which the state can be abolished; (2) the former recognise that after the proletariat has conquered political power it must utterly destroy the old state machine and substitute for it a new one consisting of the organisation of armed workers, after the type of the Commune. The latter, while advocating the destruction of the state machine, have absolutely no clear idea of *what* the proletariat will put in its place and *how* it will use its revolutionary power; the anarchists even deny that the revolutionary proletariat should utilise its state power, its revolutionary dictatorship; (3) the former demand that the proletariat be prepared for revolution by utilising the present state; the latter reject this.

In this controversy it is Pannekoek and not Kautsky who represents Marxism, for it was Marx who taught that it is not enough for the proletariat simply to conquer state power in the sense that the old state apparatus passes into new hands, but that the proletariat must smash, break this apparatus and substitute a new one for it.

Kautsky abandons Marxism for the opportunists, because precisely this destruction of the state machine, which is utterly unacceptable to the opportunists, completely disappears from his

argument, and he leaves a loophole for them which enables them to interpret "conquest" as simply winning a majority

To cover up his distortion of Marxism, Kautsky behaves like a mediaeval Schoolman—he juggles with "quotations" from Marx. In 1850 Marx wrote that "a decisive centralisation of power in the hands of the state" was necessary, and Kautsky triumphantly asks: does Pannekoek want to destroy "centralism"?

This is simply a trick similar to Bernstein's identification of the views of Marxism and Proudhonism on federalism *versus* centralism

Kautsky's "quotation" has nothing to do with the case. The new state machine permits of centralism as much as the old, if the workers voluntarily unite their armed forces, this will be centralism, but this centralism will be based on the "complete destruction" of the centralised state apparatus—the standing army, the police and the bureaucracy. Kautsky acts exactly like a swindler when he ignores the perfectly well-known arguments of Marx and Engels on the Commune and palms off a quotation which has nothing to do with the case.

He continues

"Perhaps he [Pannekoek] wants to abolish the state functions of the officials? But we cannot do without officials in the Party and the trade unions, much less in the state administration. Our programme does not demand the abolition of state officials, but that they be elected by the people.

We are not discussing here the form the administrative apparatus of the 'future state' will assume, but whether our political struggle will dissolve [*auflosen*] the state power *before we have captured it* [Kautsky's italics]. Which Ministry and its officials could be abolished?"

Then follows an enumeration of the Ministries of Education, Justice, Finance and War.

"No, not one of the present Ministries will be removed by our political struggle against the government. I repeat in order to avoid misunderstanding—we are not discussing here the form the future state will assume as a result of the victory of Social Democracy, but the effect our opposition will have on the present state"—(p. 725)

This is an obvious trick. Pannekoek raised the question of *revolution*. Both the title of his article and the passages quoted above clearly indicate this. In skipping to the question of "opposition," Kautsky substitutes the opportunist point of view for the revolutionary point of view. What he says is: at present, opposition, we shall discuss the other matter *after* we have captured power. *Revolution has vanished!* This is exactly what the opportunists wanted.

Opposition and the political struggle in general are beside the point, we are concerned with *revolution*. Revolution means that the proletariat will *destroy* the "administrative apparatus" and the *whole* state machine, and substitute for it a new one consisting of the armed workers. Kautsky reveals a "superstitious reverence" for Ministries, but why can they not be superseded, say, by commissions of specialists, working under sovereign, all-powerful Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies?

The point is not whether the "Ministries" will remain, or whether "commissions of specialists" or other kinds of institutions will be set up, this is quite unimportant. The point is whether the old state machine (connected by thousands of threads with the bourgeoisie and completely saturated with routine and inertia) shall remain, or be *destroyed* and superseded by a *new* one. Revolution must not mean that the new class will command, govern with the aid of the *old* state machine, but that this class will *smash* this machine and command, govern with the aid of a *new* machine. Kautsky either slurs over or has utterly failed to understand this *fundamental* idea of Marxism.

His quotation about officials clearly shows that he does not understand the lessons of the Commune or the teachings of Marx.

"We cannot do without officials in the Party and the trade unions."

We cannot do without officials *under capitalism, under the rule of the bourgeoisie*. The proletariat is oppressed, the masses of the toilers are enslaved by capitalism. Under capitalism democracy is restricted, cramped, curtailed, mutilated by all the conditions of wage-slavery, the poverty and misery of the masses. This is why, and the only reason why, the officials of our political and industrial organisations are corrupted—or, more precisely, tend to be corrupted—by the conditions of capitalism, why they betray a tendency to become transformed into bureaucrats, *i.e.* into privileged persons divorced from the masses and *superior to* the masses.

This is the *essence* of bureaucracy, and until the capitalists have been expropriated and the bourgeoisie overthrown, *even* proletarian officials will inevitably be "bureaucratised" to some extent.

According to Kautsky, since we shall have elected officials under socialism, we shall still have bureaucrats, "bureaucracy" will remain! This is exactly where he is wrong. It was precisely the example of the Commune that Marx quoted to show that under socialism officials will cease to be "bureaucrats,"

‘ officials ’ they will cease to be such *in proportion as*, in addition to the election of officials the principle of recall at any time is introduced, *and* as salaries are reduced to the level of the wages of the average worker, *and* as the parliamentary institutions are superseded by “ working bodies, executive and legislative at the same time ”

In essence, the whole of Kautsky’s argument against Pannekoek, and particularly his splendid point that we cannot do without officials even in our Party and trade-union organisations, is merely a repetition of Bernstein’s “ arguments ” against Marxism in general. In his renegade book, *Die Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus* Bernstein combats “ primitive ” democracy, combats what he calls ‘ doctrinaire democracy ’ imperative mandates, unpaid officials, impotent central representative bodies, etc. To prove that “ primitive democracy ” is worthless, Bernstein refers to the experience of the British Trade Unions, as interpreted by the Webbs. Seventy years of development “ in absolute freedom, ’ he says (p. 137, German edition), convinced the trade unions that primitive democracy was useless, and they substituted ordinary democracy, *i.e.* parliamentarism combined with bureaucracy, for it.

As a matter of fact the trade unions did not develop “ in absolute freedom ” *but in absolute capitalist slavery*, under which a number of concessions to the prevailing evil, violence, falsehood, exclusion of the poor from the affairs of the “ higher ” administration “ cannot be avoided ”. Under socialism much of the “ primitive ” democracy will inevitably be revived, since, for the first time in the history of civilised society, the *mass* of the population will rise to *independent* participation, not only in voting and elections, *but also in the everyday administration of affairs*. Under socialism, *all* will take part in the work of government in turn and will soon become accustomed to no one governing.

Marx’s critical analytical genius perceived in the practical measures of the Commune the *turning point*, which the opportunists fear and do not want to recognise because of their cowardice, because they are reluctant to break irrevocably with the bourgeoisie, and which the anarchists do not want to perceive, either through haste or through a general lack of understanding of the conditions of great social changes. “ We must not even think of destroying the old state machine, how can we do without Ministries and without officials? ” argues the opportunist who is completely saturated with Philistinism, and who, in fact, not only does not believe in revolution, in the creative power of revolution, but actually lives in mortal dread of it like our Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries)

"We must *think* only of destroying the old state machine, it is no use studying the *concrete* lessons of previous proletarian revolutions and analysing *what* to put in the place of what has been destroyed and *how* argues the anarchist (the best of the anarchists, of course, and not those who, with Messrs Kropotkin and Co, follow in the wake of the bourgeoisie), consequently, the tactics of the anarchist becomes the tactics of *despair* instead of a ruthlessly bold revolutionary effort to solve concrete problems while taking into account the practical conditions of the mass movement

Marx teaches us to avoid both kinds of error, he teaches us to display boundless audacity in destroying the whole of the old state machine, and at the same time he teaches us to put the question concretely the Commune was able, within a few weeks, to *start* building a *new* proletarian state machine by introducing such and such measures to secure wider democracy and to uproot bureaucracy Let us learn revolutionary audacity from the Communards, let us see in their practical measures the outline of the practically-urgent and immediately-possible measures, and then, *pursuing this road* we shall achieve the complete destruction of bureaucracy

The possibility of this destruction is guaranteed by the fact that socialism will shorten the working day, will raise the *masses* to a new life, will create conditions for the *majority* of the population that will enable *everybody* without exception, to perform "state functions," and this will lead to the *complete withering away* of the state in general

Kautsky continues

"Its [the mass strike's] object cannot be to destroy the state power, its only object can be to wring concessions from the government on some particular question, or to replace a hostile government with one that would be more yielding [*entgegenkommende*] to the proletariat But never, under any conditions, can it [the proletarian victory over a hostile government] lead to the *destruction* of the state power, it can lead only to a certain shifting [*Verschiebung*] of the relation of forces *within the state power* The aim of our political struggle remains, as hitherto, the conquest of state power by winning a majority in parliament and by converting parliament into the master of the government" (pp 726, 727, 732)

This is nothing but the purest and most vulgar opportunism a repudiation of revolution in deeds, while accepting it in words Kautsky's imagination goes no further than a "government that would be more yielding to the proletariat", this is a step backward to Philistinism compared with 1847, when *The Com-*

Communist Manifesto proclaimed "the organisation of the proletariat as the ruling class"

Kautsky will have to achieve his beloved "unity" with the Scheidemanns, Plekhanovs and Vanderveldes, all of whom will agree to fight for a government "that would be more yielding to the proletariat"

But we shall go forward to a split with these traitors to socialism and we shall fight for the complete destruction of the old state machine in order that the armed proletariat itself shall *become the government*. There is a "big difference" between the two

Kautsky may enjoy the pleasant company of the Legiens, Davids, Plekhanovs, Potresovs, Tseretellis and Chernovs, who are quite willing to work for the "shifting of the relation of forces within the state power," for "winning a majority in parliament," and converting parliament into the "master of the government". A very worthy object, which is wholly acceptable to the opportunists and which keeps everything within the framework of the bourgeois parliamentary republic

We shall go forward to a split with the opportunists, and the whole of the class-conscious proletariat will be with us—not for the purpose of "shifting the relation of forces," but for the purpose of *overthrowing the bourgeoisie, destroying bourgeois parliamentarism*, for a democratic republic after the type of the Commune, or a republic of Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies, for the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat

* * *

To the Right of Kautsky in international Socialism there are trends such as the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*¹ in Germany (Legien, David, Kolb and many others, including the Scandinavians, Stauning and Branting), the followers of Jaures and Vandervelde in France and Belgium, Turati, Treves and other representatives of the Right wing of the Italian Party, the Fabians and "Independents" (the Independent Labour Party, which, in fact, is always dependent on the Liberals) in England, and the like. All these gentry, while playing a great, very often a predominant role in parliamentary work and in the Party press, openly repudiate the dictatorship of the proletariat and pursue a policy of unconcealed opportunism. In the eyes of these gentry, the

"dictatorship" of the proletariat "contradicts" democracy ! !
There is really no essential difference between them and the petty-bourgeois democrats

Taking this circumstance into consideration, we are right in drawing the conclusion that the Second International, in the persons of the overwhelming majority of its official representatives, has completely sunk into opportunism. The experience of the Commune has been not only forgotten, but distorted. Instead of inculcating in the workers' minds the idea that the time is near when they must rise up and smash the old state machine and substitute for it a new one, and in this way make their political rule the foundation for the socialist reconstruction of society, they have actually taught the workers the very opposite and have depicted the "conquest of power" in a way that has left thousands of loopholes for opportunism.

The distortion and hushing up of the question of the relation of the proletarian revolution to the state could not but play an immense role at a time when the states, with their military apparatus enlarged as a consequence of imperialist rivalry, became transformed into military monsters which were exterminating millions of people in order to decide whether England or Germany—this or that finance capital—was to rule the world.

POSTSCRIPT TO THE FIRST EDITION

THIS pamphlet was written in August and September 1917. I had already drawn up the plan for the next, the seventh chapter, "The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917." But except for the title I was unable to write a single line of the chapter. I was "interrupted" by the political crisis—the eve of the October Revolution of 1917. Such an "interruption" can only be welcomed, but the writing of the second part of the pamphlet ("The Experience of the Russian Revolutions of 1905 and 1917") will probably have to be put off for a long time. It is more pleasant and useful to go through the "experience of the revolution" than to write about it.

THE AUTHOR

PETROGRAD DECEMBER 13 (NOVEMBER 30), 1917

Written in August-September, 1917

First published as a pamphlet in 1918

